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COMPTON AUDLEY.

VOL. I.

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COMPTON AUDLEY;

OR,

HANDS NOT HEARTS.

BY LORD WILLIAM LENNOX.

The hands of old gave hearts ;
But our new heraldry is — hands not hearts.

SHAKSPEARE.

Un tel hymen est l'enfer de ce monde.

VOLTAIRE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1841.

COMPTON AUDLEY.

CHAPTER I.

MEETING AT ST. PAUL'S.

To Thee, to Thee,

On this appointed day shall thanks ascend,

That Thou hast brought our warfare to an end.

Oh, 'tis a goodly Ordinance! the sight,

Though sprung from bleeding war, is one of pure delight.

Bless thou the hour, or ere the hour arrive,

When a whole people shall kneel down in prayer,

And at one moment, in one spirit strive,

With lip and heart, to tell their gratitude

For thy protecting care,

Their solemn joy, praising the Eternal Lord

For tyranny subdued,

And for the sway of equity renewed,

For liberty confirmed, and peace restored.

WORDSWORTH.

THE day appointed for the thanksgiving
at St. Paul's for the restoration of the bless-

ings of peace, opened with a bright summer morning, in the month of July, 1814. Already the bells were loudly ringing from the numerous steeples of the city; various corps of military, with "olive branch and laurel crown," lined the streets, through which the expected procession was to pass, while the thunder of the cannon, reverberating at intervals, through the streets and squares of the mighty metropolis, announced its approach to the cathedral. At length the grand solemnity began. Every voice was, for the moment, silenced. The holy liturgy was chanted; and to the throng of beating human hearts, with all their secret scrolls of buried grief, were given the treasures of immortal hope.

"Hark! how the flood
Of the rich organ harmony bears up
Their voice on its high waves."

The inspired anthem of praise now echoed.

through the lofty aisles of the Christian temple; the full, deep, swelling tones of the organ went forth in murmured thunder; the hymns which Miriam sang and David tuned, the respondent chant and service, the inspiring, sacred hallelujahs filled the vast pile; and, as the concluding benediction was given, all eyes were turned upon one man;—upon him, the hero of a hundred fields, who never advanced but to cover his arms with glory, and who never retreated but to eclipse the very glory of his advance: who, upon the banks of the Douro and the Tagus, of the Ebro and Garonne, had won the hearts of nations; whose generous and lofty spirit inspired his troops with unbounded confidence, and taught them that the day of battle was ever the day of victory! whose name will remain an imperishable monument, exciting others to aim at like deeds of patriotism; whose campaigns were sanctified by the cause, were sullied by no

cruelties, no crimes; the chariot wheels of whose triumphs were followed by no curses, and who upon his death-bed might remember his victories among his good works.

The memory of the contests, the sight of those who had survived the destruction of the battle field, associated as all was with the duties of religious worship, was well calculated to inspire the purest feeling of veneration, and produce an influence on the mind, approaching to sublimity. A spirit of holiness cast over every soul a glow of patriotism, and the service of the nation's thanksgiving was, on this great occasion, performed with a oneness of sentiment and feeling, perhaps hitherto unparalleled. The ceremony was rendered still more intensely effective by the presence of the conqueror of conquerors, who, at the distance of a hundred years, revived the glories of a Marlborough, and outwent the expectations of the people who confided in his strength.

The service ended, the gathered multitude again went forth, yet pressing, clinging and struggling still around the church; "for" to use the good language of Southey—"the people would not be debarred from gazing till the last moment upon the Hero, the darling Hero of England." A temporary lull now prevailed; the crowd drew simultaneously back, and the Duke of Wellington came forth to thrill the one heart of the people, whose battles he had fought. Meanwhile, the various bands of music struck up the inspiring air, "See the conquering hero comes!" handkerchiefs waved, and shouts, cries, and huzzas, burst upon the ear from all quarters. Screams and laughter were intermingled in the general *mêlée*, but the pulse of joy which throbbed in the great breast of a nation might be *heard* as it sometimes is in a single human breast.

In the midst of this maddening confusion a young officer was endeavouring to thread his

way, when the words “Dudley; Mr. Ravensworth!” pronounced by a voice he could not mistake, suddenly attracted his attention, and on looking round he perceived the beautiful Constance Graham separated from her party, and struggling amidst the crowd which thronged the space near to which the carriages of the company were drawn up.

It was their first meeting, it may be here observed, after a long separation; and in a few moments her young lover, in spite of all the many obstacles that stood in his way, was at her side. He had much to say, and amongst other things, many enquiries to make respecting both her family and herself; but at this moment, Lady Margaret Graham’s carriage was announced, and by a very fortunate combination of circumstances exactly at the instant when Dudley Ravensworth, and the fair Constance happened to rejoin that lady and her friends.

“Constance!” said Lady Margaret, “where have you been? I have been looking for you for the last quarter of an hour. Oh! Mr. Ravensworth, how kind you are! and now, since I have leisure to ask, pray where are you to be heard of?”

“We shall meet to-morrow at White’s ball,” said Dudley; who, probably, considered the present time too short for a more explicit explanation, with regard to his movements.

“I regret,” returned Lady Margaret, with a most gracious smile, and pausing before the steps of the carriage, “that we cannot obtain tickets; our particular friend, Lady Mary Somerton, is at present out of town, and several others are so much dispersed at this time, that I fear we must be contented to be absentees.”

“How unfortunate!” said Dudley, addressing the observation, however, more to himself than to Lady Margaret; “but possibly Lady

Margaret might allow me to exert my influence in the matter?—I know the committee well,” he added in some confusion, for he knew not exactly how his offer might—for various causes afterwards to be explained—be received: Lady Margaret, however, very frankly accepted his proffered services, and it was agreed that he should call at Grosvenor Square next day, in order to report progress.

“We dine in Portland Place at the Strathconnells’,” said Lady Margaret, following her daughter into the carriage, “and in case you should receive the tickets late you will find us there;” and having thus spoken, Lady Margaret and her fair charge were whirled off to that place, which no other place is said to be like—“Home.”

The morning came,—four, five, six o’clock, and Dudley did not, as he himself had promised, appear. Constance, however, did not despair, though her mother vented her anger

in sundry apothegms and observations which went to prove that all young men, and Dudley Ravensworth amongst them, were flighty, idle, sincere only for the moment, and totally and irreclaimably forgetful of both duty and promises. In fine, half-past seven arrived, and the carriage was at the door. As it stopped before the mansion of the Strathconnells' a gentle tap at the window attracted the attention of Constance, and on looking round she beheld Dudley by her side on horseback, with the tickets for White's ball in his hand. Constance's scarcely suppressed exclamation of thanks—her look of joyful surprise, the brilliant smile of pleasure that beamed on her countenance, more than repaid Dudley for the trouble he had undergone. He had just time to put the much envied tickets into Constance's hands when another carriage drove up.

“I dine with Spencer at the Albany,” said Dudley, addressing Lady Margaret; “if I can

be of any service in escorting you, command me." But to this arrangement, Lady Margaret, influenced it may be by her own principles of returning prudence, demurred. They should *meet, at any rate*, she merely observed, and Mr. Ravensworth must give himself no further trouble upon their account.

This celebrated ball, the most brilliant, perhaps of any other assembly of the season, quite realised the expectations of Constance. She was herself in excellent spirits. The company, distinguished as it was, was numerous; yet not too much so. Dudley Ravensworth was a partner in the dance very much to her mind; nor need we add, that he had long since obtained that degree of interest in her heart which makes memory and hope sisters in joy.

During the drive home, Lady Margaret took care to express how *very much* she disapproved of the manner in which Constance wasted her time on a *detrimental*, as she called

all younger brothers. Mr. Ravensworth she allowed was very well to dance with, once or so during the evening; but to *devote* herself to him was, to say the least of it, very injudicious. It was unprofitable, fruitless; and had not Constance unconsciously dropped during the long *mentorian* harangue into a kind of slumber, the happy pleasures of the evening were likely to have ended in many painful and perplexing reflections.

It is now time, however, to introduce more particularly to our readers the party who had thus accidentally encountered the young *militaire* on the day appointed for the general thanksgiving at St. Paul's. The family of Sir Alexander and Lady Margaret Graham consisted of an only child, Constance Graham. Lady Margaret herself, descended from a dynasty of antediluvian lords, which boasted itself uncontaminated by the mixture of plebeian blood, was the daughter of a Scotch Earl, poor

and proud—a common alliance; and having been disappointed in her first love, had condescended to attach herself to the *semi-nobility* of a baronet. Imperious in manner, with a proud and commanding spirit, she possessed a *pedigree mania* to an alarming extent. Rigid and censorious in her judgment of others; wholly destitute of feeling, and exquisitely precise in all the forms of life (never having herself swerved the millionth fraction of an inch from the rectilinear routine of exact propriety); selfish and narrow-minded, her charity was entirely passive, consisting of a few expressions of surprise and sympathy. She had contrived even from her childhood to have her own way; in a word, she had governed her parents, her relations, her husband, and now exercised a strict and uncompromising discipline over her daughter. Her discourse was peremptory, her gait ungainly, and she drew out the thread of her verbosity finer than the staple of her

argument. Her ambition had been to reign as a star of fashion, and she had attained that eminence by banishing all traces of heart from her proceedings, and by keeping aloof from every one, whether bound by the ties of blood or gratitude, that was not admitted into the exclusive circle of fashionable life.

Lady Margaret was a most expert chaperon ; her tactics in a ball-room were pre-eminently conspicuous. She had the art of walking the room so as to shun all bores and detrimentals,—only fit to call carriages, and get boas and shawls, and to encounter (by chance) all the *eligibles*. She was ever ready with excuses of “headaches,” “uneven floors,” “heat of rooms,” “carriage called,” “sprained ankle,” or any other impromptu afflictions, when a younger son presumed to ask Constance to dance.

Sir Alexander himself was one of those good kind of every-day men, of which genus we have more in the world than of any other.

He was good-tempered, till fretted—liberal, till forced to calculate his income with reference to his expenses; good-hearted, open, and hospitable to those with whom he wished to be well; and very cold—absolutely frigid towards those with whom, like Orlando, he desired to “be better strangers.” In short, Sir Alexander Graham was one of the common lot; though for the honour of humanity, he had ever proved himself a most excellent husband, and a most affectionate, as well as at all times a very exemplary father.

Graham castle was an old Norman fortress, occupying the summit of a gently rising ground in the middle of an extensive range of pasture ground or chace. The outward fortifications, together with a majestic river encircling it on the west and north, had made it, according to the mode of warfare then in use, an almost impregnable place of strength. It was encompassed by a high wall, six feet in thick-

ness, and several hundred yards in length, embattled and strengthened at intervals with lofty square towers, defended by loop-holes, and by rows of machiollations for pouring down melted lead and scalding water on the heads of assailants.

Within these walls was placed, after the Norman manner of building castles, the habitation of the owner and his warrior retainers; the doors opening upon, and the windows looking into, the court. One side descended in a gradual slope to the river which ran beneath, and this side had formerly been doubly defended, not only by the outward walls, which now however no longer existed, but by those of the castle, strengthened in the centre by the keep, a large square tower of hewn stonework, of immense and gigantic height, and which still remained to this our modern day in nearly its original state, though tenanted chiefly by the twilight bat and the ominous

owl. The stones of the old battlements which had withstood the assault of hosts, were now rent and rifted by the warfare of ages.

“ And there they stand, as stands a lofty mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save by the crannying wind,
Or holding dark communion with the cloud.
There was a day when they were young and proud,
Banners on high, and battles passed below ;
But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust ere now ;
And the bleak battlements shall bear no future blow.”

Considerable repairs, however, had been made to the other parts of the edifice, by the grandfather of Sir Alexander. The dilapidated walls, and other decayed portions, were new-faced or rebuilt from the foundation ; and, amongst other improvements, a marble fountain had been erected in the centre of the quadrangle, while the massive stone-mullioned casements, which scarcely admitted the light,

had been succeeded by sash windows of plate glass. Still, however, the castle, with its walls and towers, hoary with the lichens of age, and its elaborate case-work of sculptured free-stone, preserved much of its ancient appearance of stern magnificence and feudal grandeur. The interior, too, still retained much of its original character.

The large hall, some seventy feet long by about thirty feet broad, panelled with dark wainscot, was furnished with several rows of long oak tables and benches. Over the carved doors, surmounted with heavy entablatures, were displayed some spoils of the chase, or the battle of days gone by. Over some branched the stately antlers of the red deer, and over others grinned the wolf's head: the walls were hung round with suits of ancient armour, faded waving banners, shields, and lances,—the accoutrements of its former martial possessors. — Whichever way you

turned, helm, hauberk, and twisted-mail, spear, rapier, musket, pike, and morion, broad-sword, and target, frowned upon you. Some had seen goodly service: one sword bore witness to Palestine, by the inscription on its blade — “A CRUCE SALUS, 1196. EFFINGHAM GRAHAM:” — for Sir Alexander’s ancestors had fought side by side with their sovereigns, in the wars of the Crusades, — of the white and red roses, or led their vassals at Agincourt, Cressy, Poitiers, and Bosworth. Some had suffered with the martyred Charles in the battles of Edgehill, Stratton, Lansdown, and Naseby. That kneeling figure, representing the soldier and the saint, whose blood had purpled the dark field of Marston Moor, brought back the patriot Hampden, and all the horrors of that unhappy war. Others had triumphed with the son of Charles, the merry Monarch. All testified that Gra-

ham Castle had borne the stern brunt of ruthless war; that its “donjon keep” had heard the laments of many a solitary prisoner; that many an open deed of blood had been perpetrated in its halls.

The dark tapestried apartments, with their mythological and scriptural histories, wrought by the fingers of high-born dames; — their huge hearths, — the tall-backed, carved, oaken chairs, — antique ebony cabinets, set upon legs that resembled scrolls, and huge, mis-shapen, heavy chests, — rich velvet hangings, — fretted cornices, — cedar panellings, — old family portraits of ancient knights, and their ladye loves, primly dressed in starched ruff, jewelled stomacher, and high-heeled shoes, seemed starting from their canvass, and would make the gazer fancy himself in the courts of eld, taking him back to those days of love and chivalry, of festivity and magnificence, to

the age of early minstrelsy and song, and feudal hospitality, when its courts and halls were thronged with gallant knights and their retainers, fair dames, merry minstrels, and sandalled pilgrims. All these helped to realise the idea, that the present occupants of the Castle still wandered over its apartments before their time, and kept their revels in its chambers at least some two or three centuries before their appointed hour.

Dudley Ravensworth had passed much of his time at Graham Castle. He could not follow, with his eye, a long series of family portraits, — he could not hear recounted the history of the tapestry rooms, — where the warlike adventures of some of the earliest ancestors of the Grahams were wrought into action by the fair hands of their ladies, — nor listen to the traditions which explained the various symbols of their ar-

morial badges, nor view the antique weapons, with which they fought, nor the tattered banners which they had purchased with their blood, — without imbibing something like the spirit of those times. He felt sensations amounting to enthusiasm, for a family of such antiquity; and his imagination bore him, against the stream of time, back to the days of chivalry and song.

The lofty oriels, with their florid fretwork, even yet decorated with curiously painted glass, quaintly fashioned, and their colours blending through age into a dim and dusky brown, represented legends, armorial bearings, and inscriptions; while the figures of grim and rugged warriors frowned from the painted casements, which otherwise had presented to the view a fair expanse of lawn and shrubbery, opening upon wild tracts of rough forest land, overrun with fern, and broken into dell and valley; bright water glancing in the fore-

ground, mountains with their fantastic outlines bounding the distance, and an occasional faintly revealed, perspective-like "vista with a void seen through," glimmering at intervals as a chasm in the hills permitted the eye to rest upon the far obscurity of uninterrupted distance.

The approach to the castle was by a superb avenue of full-grown beech trees, through a noble park interspersed with immense oaks and elms, skirted by clumps of wood, untrodden dingles, and sequestered groves, and adorned by a magnificent sheet of water that ran its estuaries into the dells and thickets of the tangled and sometimes impenetrable forest-ground. The trees, too, had grown into every possible shape of picturesque luxuriance, and threw their heavy shadows and solemn glooms over the brighter verdure of the pasture beneath.

“ And there soft sweeps in velvet green
The plain, with many a glade between ;
Where tangled alleys far invade
The depths of the brown forest shade ;
And the tall fern obscured the lawn,
Sweet shelter for the sportive fawn.”

The sheep feeding in scattered flocks, and the fallow-deer grazing near them, and seen occasionally through the gaps of the forest, increased the beauty of the scene, and added still more to its character of almost boundless and endless variety.

CHAPTER II.

CONSTANCE'S CHARACTER.

A radiant vision in her joy, she moved
More like a poet's dream, or form divine,
Heaven's prototype of perfect womanhood ;
So lovely was the presence.

SOUTHEY'S *Roderick*.

She alone in the abstract of herself, that small but ravishing substance, comprehends whatever is or can be wished in the idea of woman.

MASSINGER.

OF Constance Graham, the heiress of the before-mentioned fair demesne, we have at length to speak. Her countenance, though perfectly beautiful, and full of brilliancy and

animation, was naturally capable of great variety of expression. There was on her brow a meditative tone, almost amounting to seriousness, which it was difficult to reconcile with her general buoyancy and elasticity of character. But in this air of pensive thoughtfulness—a sort of shadow of joy—there was nothing that approached the sombre or the sad; on the contrary, it was relieved and almost banished by the smiles which rose in rapid succession, like handmaids, to her bidding, and “did their spiriting gently.” There was a play of feature that revealed the inmost emotion of the soul; the cheek now flushing with pleasure, now pallid with thought; the brilliant eye now alive with light, now deepening into repose, or melting with tenderness and feeling. Radiant with beauty, and overflowing with natural spirits, Constance Graham enjoyed an equanimity of temper *à toute épreuve*.

Constance possessed an animated vivacity of disposition, breathing life and grace into every object it neared or touched,—mingled, however, with a benevolence of feeling which served to retain that admiration which mere beauty so often fails to secure. Hers was that species of beauty which it is difficult to describe, and which sets at defiance the powers of the painter and the sculptor; it was that beauty, the most powerful charm of which consisted in expression: and there was, moreover, in the fair possessor of so many charms the most perfect unconsciousness of their existence.

Too lovely to dread the rivalry of any one, too sincere to descend to affectation, or to admit for a moment of disguise, she won all hearts without the assistance of either art or artifice. There was *one*, however, from out of the crowd of her admirers, for whom she herself indulged a feeling that perhaps exceeded the gentler attachments of friendship,—the

same who had so unexpectedly encountered her on the day of the public rejoicing for the peace.

Dudley Ravensworth was the second son of Sir Francis Ravensworth. Of Sir Francis himself we may pause to say, that he had been a courtier and diplomatist by profession since his earliest years. He was an imperfect specimen of Sir Henry Wotton's definition of an ambassador, that is as far as the virtue is concerned, "a virtuous man sent abroad to lie for the good of his country;" and at the present period of our history occupied, through dint of unwearying perseverance, an important situation in the neighbouring kingdom of Ireland. Towering ambition was the main spring of his life; self-aggrandisement the object of his existence. He was very conceited, of voracious vanity, though by no means good-looking; but of this last circumstance he was profoundly and obdurately ignorant; he was a bore of

stupendous magnitude, — a *ci-devant jeune homme*, unconscious of the meaning of the term *has been*, — a man of decayed fortune and broken constitution, — and very aristocratic in his notions; he had an utter horror of all new creations, — Lords and Baronets springing up every year like so many mushrooms.

Filled with lofty ideas of the consequence and dignity of ancient families, Sir Francis looked down with the most ineffable contempt upon the many upstarts of the day; persons, as he was pleased to call them, “without grandfathers.” He tyrannised over the weak, and succumbed to the strong; he piqued himself also on admitting to his acquaintance none under the rank of himself; station and the peerage being points of importance of such weight in his mind as to outweigh every other circumstance connected with the ordinary affairs of human life.

His manner corresponded with this meta-

physical conception of dignity in the abstract. He measured out his bows exactly according to the rank of the party, from the saccharine smile, familiar nod, and "Ha ! how are you?" to the formal bend, and "Your servant, sir." To the great he was humble even to fawning, full of smiles, with a servile manner and sycophantic demeanour. To the poor, his haughtiness bordered on contempt. He could bend, where it was profitable to bend, without considering whether the homage were worthily or unworthily bestowed ; he could smile with most fascinating sweetness of expression, without the least internal sensation of pleasure or delight.

Ravensworth manor was in the vicinage of Graham Castle, but the owner had not visited it for many years. With Sir Alexander Graham, Sir Francis was scarcely acquainted. A cold distant bow was the only recognition that ever passed between them when they had

met by accident. This feud had been ascribed to many causes, — to the deadly hatred of the two houses in the wars of Lancaster and York, when the ancestor of Sir Francis Ravensworth, taken prisoner at the battle of Northampton, was cruelly slain, and his property confiscated in 1460. It had also been traced to an old political struggle.

Now, undoubtedly, there had been hereditary feuds in ruder times; but they could not have actuated the present heads of the houses to nourish a personal dislike. It was some offence and slight which Sir Francis fancied had been shown him by Sir Alexander, that influenced his conduct, and which was as deeply resented by the owner of Graham Castle. At a public meeting, in which the former Baronet had indulged, “as was his custom,” in bold assertions, irrelevant digressions, illogical and contradictory inferences, Sir Alexander had, in reply, pointed out the impossibility of “fol-

lowing the flights of visionary speculatists into the regions of theory and absurd hypothesis;" and, in reference to some political job in which Sir Francis was implicated, proceeded to "bare the mean heart that lurks beneath a star."

Sir Francis was one of those who have not the judgment to reflect that men may be violent political opponents, and yet enjoy the social intercourse of private life. With him every quarrel was a personal one; his haughty and overbearing temper magnified every trifling dispute into an act of undisguised hostility. Matters, however, had not proceeded with Sir Francis so smoothly as he could have wished, or perhaps as he himself, from his general system of conventional propriety, had exactly deserved at the hands of destiny. His eldest son, to begin with, the heir-apparent of all that lineage, hitherto unmixed and untainted, had lately formed a *mésalliance* in Italy, which event had so exasperated him,

that all intercourse had eventually ceased between him and his father ; and on Dudley, his second, he had now begun to look with an uneasy and unsleeping sort of suspicion, as if *he too* would suddenly end in perpetrating what Sir Francis considered as highly mortifying and derogatory to the family dignity.

Such, then, was his present position ; nor can we say that it was, all things considered, a very enviable one. With his son Dudley, however, we have more to do, and to him, therefore, we again return.

Dudley Ravensworth had just attained his ninth year when he was sent to Westminster School. He had now grown up a tall handsome youth, with a profusion of dark brown hair, fine large dark eyes, and a frank, open, and ingenuous countenance. His disposition was affable, though not tame. If he perceived what he imagined to be an affront, his natural

courage would break forth impetuously. His independent spirit, his goodnature, his talents, and a certain unexplainable magnanimity about him, soon gained him the affections of his schoolfellows ; for the weak ever found in him a champion and a protector, and the strong and the tyrannous a ready and resolute opponent.

Alfred Graham, the only brother of Constance, was then a year his junior, and the generous disposition of the boys had led them to forget the jealousy that had so long existed between the heads of the families. Young Graham gave early promise of abilities of no common order ; indeed the mark of genius was indelibly stamped upon his brow. But his frame was unfortunately enfeebled by long illness, while his languid and sickly-looking expression of countenance indicated that his sufferings were not yet wholly exhausted. The deep red hectic spot burned on his cheek, adding

the *mockery* of beauty to the slow ravages of an incurable and subtle disease. His disposition was extremely gentle and confiding; and he had found in Dudley Ravensworth a friend after his own heart. Full, therefore, and unrestricted was the confidence on either side; sincere and fervent was the friendship of the youths; but, alas! like all other mortal friendships, theirs was soon destined to be dissolved.

A numerous party had assembled at Graham Castle during the winter holidays, and Dudley Ravensworth had been invited to accompany his school companion and friend, and he had wrung from his father an unwilling consent to his accepting the invitation; when, in the midst of the festivities, young Graham fell ill, and, to the grief of his family, this last attack of his insatiate disease was pronounced to be fatal. Constance was vigilant and unremitting in her attentions; she would scarcely for a moment quit her brother's side: she watched

the progress of his melancholy disorder ; her hand smoothed the pillow of the sufferer ; her kind heart suggested every plan for affording relief ; then she would kneel, and with pure devotion join in the prayer for the sick and dying ; but her petitions were unavailing.

Alfred sank with rapidity. Day after day saw him become weaker and fainter ; and in a short period of time the heir of Sir Alexander and the ambitious Lady Margaret expired. On the morning of his death the sun rose with unusual splendour. Dudley had watched all night by his bedside. The beams fell upon his beautiful countenance pale as alabaster.

“ Constance,” said the dying boy, as he fondly took her hand, “ we must part.”

“ Say not so, dear Alfred. There is yet hope. Yes, yes, I know—I feel there is hope.”

“ No, dearest, no :” he gasped for breath ; then, in a faint tone, murmured “ Dudley—Oh, Constance—why is he not here ? ”

“ Dearest Alfred, he is here.”

“ Dudley—Constance” —there was a pause ; his breath came short and quick, his lips moved slightly but uttered nothing, one convulsive sigh escaped him, he sank lifeless in the arms of his friend. This melancholy event left not an untouched heart in the village, and reduced the inmates of the castle to a state bordering on distraction.

“ Notwithstanding the warnings of philosophers, and the daily examples of losses and misfortunes which life forces upon our observation, such is the absorption of our thoughts in the business of the present day, such the resignation of our reason to empty hopes of future felicity, or such our unwillingness to foresee what we dread, that every calamity comes suddenly upon us, and not only presses us as a burden, but crushes as a blow.” — So writes Samuel Johnson on the death of his mother ; and who of my readers does

not feel the weight and truth of this observation ?

Nothing is more evident than that the very cradle witnesses the departure of a great portion of the human species, and equally certain is it that the decays of age must terminate in death. We hear every hour of *it* arresting the progress of the young, by casualty, pestilence, or sickness—or consigning the more advanced in age to “that bourne from whence no traveller returns.” It presents itself to us under various forms. The grave still yawns for the victims of loathsome disease, abject penury, destructive wars, devouring ocean, desolating fires, raging storms and famine; and yet with all these instances of the shortness and uncertainty of life, it seldom or ever comes home to us; the subject of death is seldom present to our thoughts.

Sorrow that happens in the very midst of gladness and rejoicing is felt to be peculiarly

bitter in its effects, as sickness falls heaviest on those who are in the full enjoyment of health ; and *death*, as it were, amidst *life*, startles and affrights the more by the contrast. Sir Alexander, Lady Margaret, his sister Constance, and his companion, Dudley Ravensworth, felt, as Alfred expired, stunned ; so terrible and so appalling was the blow. A week before, all was gaiety and joy ; “troops of friends,” young, like himself, were alive with spirit. *He* was happy in all the brightheartedness of sunny boyhood ; and now, how was the scene changed !

On this occasion Dudley experienced a sensation, never known to him before ; when he thought of his departed friend he found excuses for every weakness, palliatives for every fault ; he recollected a thousand endearments unreturned, a thousand favours unrepaid, and which had, at the moment, glided insensibly from his memory. Sad, therefore, were the

hours in which Dudley, a martyr to his grief, sat by the side of his early companion.

Lady Margaret was not a distracted mourner ; she supported her affliction with great fortitude. The world gave her credit for extraordinary patience and resignation ; little did they know her submission proceeded from constitutional apathy.

Dudley, now called into action, struggled against his own sorrow ; he was with the mourners, mingling his tears with theirs, cheering and supporting them in the hour of distress. Nothing that could tend to alleviate their grief was neglected. Constance, too, returned, spirit-bowed and heart-stricken, from Alfred's grave ; her tears fell "like the dew-drop from Heaven" on a parched soil.

But let us not linger on this dark page of her existence. Time, the comforter, wrought its miracle ; it had softened the poignancy of grief, the wound was cicatrised. Time did its

work ; and, deeply as Constance wept over the untimely fate of her poor brother, she derived consolation from the knowledge that he was prepared to die. Religion sent comfort to her desolate bosom, and repelled the outpourings of despair.

Ever since her brother's death, Constance had known no companion but her own sombre thoughts. Amidst the intensity and anguish of her grief she had no one near her to whom she could reveal the inward emotions of her heart. There were none, in fact, from whom she could derive either sympathy or consolation, or with whom she could interchange her thoughts and feelings. Her father had soon recovered from his grief, severe as it had been ; her mother had latterly begun to console herself in planning new schemes of ambition in favour of Constance herself. In Dudley, however, the latter had found one to whom she could impart her sorrows equally with her

joys ; and from him, while he still remained with them, she received the only consolation her heart was fitted to receive ; for, with him, she could still mourn over the remembrance of her brother, while he as tenderly lamented his friend.

What can be more delightful than the approving voice of one who appreciates every thought that springs in the young and guileless heart ? Need we to add, that the, at first, merely giddy and youthful preference of Dudley and Constance Graham for each other, soon ripened into feelings of deep, fond, and irradicable love ?

CHAPTER III.

INTERVIEW PREVIOUS TO DUDLEY'S LEAVING
ENGLAND.

Here is my hand for my true constancy,
And when that hour o'er slips me in the day,
Wherein I sigh not for thy sake,
The next ensuing hour some foul mischance
Torments me for my love's forgetfulness.

SHAKSPEARE.

WE must take our readers back to the period when Dudley and Constance were now enjoying all the *agrémens* of Graham Castle. The pleasure of being alone together was indeed deep and intense. Through the rich and beautiful woods, over the sunny lawns,

Dudley and Constance wandered on. It would, however, be uninteresting to detail the progress of a feeling which grew with their growth and strengthened with their strength. There was an undefined and strange intelligence which informed them that they were becoming inexpressibly dear to each other. Their eyes met oftener than they were formerly accustomed to do, and on meeting were withdrawn in confusion. Their similarities of taste, their mutual admiration and delight, soon ripened into passion; they loved with all the intenseness of a first love; it was not strange that two young hearts thus brought together should become one. Their mornings were spent in a luxurious *far niente*, in wandering around the beautiful scenery of Graham Castle, climbing its wild mountains, loitering upon its lakes, listening to the sound "of the light dip of the suspended oar." Their evenings were passed in the interchange

of conversation and music. They sang together the most touching duets of Rossini, in which Dudley's deep-toned voice mated so well with Constance's beautiful contr'alto. They read together those musical scenes of Metastasio, so replete with the finest touches of poetry, so abundant in all the varieties and transitions of passion. Happy were they, perfectly happy in one another's society; theirs was the dream of unalloyed delight. In a word, they loved.

Constance had ever evinced the greatest generosity and candour towards Dudley; she had neither concealed nor disguised her sentiments,—no cold-hearted prudence had restrained her; conscious of the purity of her thoughts, she had given him all her love. But as usual, “the course of true love” did not go out of its way “to run smooth:” rumours had reached Sir Francis Ravensworth of the intimacy that was springing up be-

tween his son and the youthful Constance, and his diplomatic eye, being accustomed to penetrate into futurity, aroused his fears with regard to the important result, to which this at present all but childish attachment might lead; he, therefore, issued a protocol desiring Dudley instantly to quit England, and proceed to travel on the Continent for at least a year. Three days were alone allowed him to prepare for his journey.

As with all persons of enthusiastic temperament, Dudley called up those dreams the young are wont to form in the brighter period of their existence. He imagined it was easy to love on with unshaken affection, however distant the fulfilment of his hopes might be. He was not aware of the numberless influences which, during a prolonged separation, tend effectually to weaken, if not entirely to disengage a youthful attachment.

As the day approached which was to wit-

ness his departure from England and Constance, his mind became dejected. Constance exerted all the powers of her heart to banish from him the sorrowing thoughts of that parting, which, though she betrayed it not, depressed her as deeply as her lover.

It was on the evening preceding the day on which Dudley was to depart, that he wandered through a shrubbery bordering the river. Every tree was hallowed by a remembrance of the playmate of his infancy, the companion of his boyhood; he sought a retired path to pursue undisturbed the train of his reflections, but was suddenly roused from his reverie by the sound of a footstep; he looked round, and with the utmost surprise beheld her who had awakened the conflicting feelings he had been endeavouring to lull into repose. In a moment he was at her side. They sat down together upon a rock that overhung the river; the stream, stealing calmly and silently

on at their feet, seemed as if unwilling to interrupt the quiet stillness of the evening, or the pensive disposition of the lovers' thoughts,

“ So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,
And yet they glide like happiness away.”

Dudley pressed Constance's hand gently, so gently, she could not be offended; he next prayed fervently for her happiness.

“ You will not forget me, Constance, when I am absent?” he said, “ you will sometimes think kindly of me.”

“ Forget you — never, Dudley !” was her energetic and promptly uttered reply, “ my brother's best and dearest friend :” here remembrance choked her voice, and, with a quivering lip, she faintly added in a tone that came directly from the heart, and went to it, “ Never !”

Dudley, as he held her trembling hand in his, entreated her that she would wear a ring

which he now placed upon her finger ; under the initials D. R. these words were engraved,

“ Amore e Costanza ! ”

“ Yes, Dudley,” she replied, “ for your sake will I retain it even to my death hour. May heaven bless you ! ” then smiling through her tears, she added, “ take this flower, this perishing trifle, ’tis all I have to give, keep it even when it is dead, for the sake of one who will never forget you.”

“ Farewell, then, my dearest Constance ! I go happy ; if I return not, there is one true heart that will grieve for me.”

Their conversation, we need not say, was long and sad ; tears more than once attested their tenderness and their grief, but they vowed everlasting fidelity ; they promised frequent communication, and, at length, silently they proceeded in their return to the Castle.

The next day was the last in which they were destined to share the bliss of each other’s

society. Few words were spoken by any of the party during dinner; Sir Alexander engrossed Dudley's attention during the evening. At rather an early hour, too, Lady Margaret rose to retire, and with a chilly manner wished her departing guest "good night."

At these words, Constance turned pale, her eyes met Dudley's, and, as he bade her a last adieu, he contrived to whisper to her, "Remember!"

"Dudley, I will! I will!" was responded in the same stifled voice. She then turned away, lest her mother should witness her emotion.

For some months Constance's mind was absorbed in the most melancholy thoughts, at the loss of the much prized presence of one to whom she had been united by ties the strongest and dearest. She looked in vain for the smile that was wont to greet her, and for the kind words that soothed her: the solitude

that succeeded to grief made her experience all the misery of—

“the dreary void,
The leafless desert of the mind,
The waste of feelings unemployed.”

But her tears were not the tears of unmixed bitterness; he was gone, it was true, but she placed implicit faith in his love and fealty; for, if there were truth in man, it must, she felt, dwell in the ingenuous breast of Dudley. Honour and he were in one brotherhood; he had left her with the certainty of being beloved; that certainty cast a momentary brightness over the dark decree of fate, and helped to sustain her fortitude under circumstances of a nature more than commonly depressing to a young and sensitive being.

Two years had now elapsed since Dudley's departure from England, during which period he had been cherishing his passion and pursuing his studies at Gottingen; and he had

only just returned from Germany, having been appointed ensign in the —— Regiment, when he had met Constance for the first time after his long absence, in the manner already described—at St. Paul's.

CHAPTER IV.

LADY M. GRAHAM AND LORD ATHERLEY'S
CHARACTER.

“Love should seek its match ; and that is love
Or nothing ! Station—fortune find their match
In things resembling them. They are not love !
Comes love (that subtle essence, without which
Life were but leaden dulness—weariness !
A plodding trudger on a heavy road !)
Comes it of title deeds which fools may boast ?
Or coffers vilest hands may hold the keys of ?
Or that ethereal lamp that lights the eyes
To shed their sparkling lustre o’er the face,
Gives to the velvet skin its blushing glow,
And burns as bright beneath the peasant’s roof
As roof of palaced prince ? Yes ! Love should seek
Its match ; then give my love its match in thine,
Its match which in thy gentle breast doth lodge
So rich, so earthly, heavenly, fair, and rich,
As monarchs have no thought of on their thrones,
Which kingdoms do bear up.”

SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

DUDLEY and Constance had loved before the death of Alfred, but they were then too young, too timid, and too little tutored in the skilful ways of life to arrange any plan for the furtherance of their future correspondence; still it could live upon its own resources; and the very death of the friend and brother gave to it a charmed life.

“The love where death hath set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow.”

The young are bound to the will and the authority of their elders by many invisible ties; but these same ties are, nevertheless, found to be fastened irrevocably around their victims. Dudley had, therefore, retired from the presence of his beloved Constance because fate and necessity had, as it were, compelled him from her; and Constance had suffered him to depart, because she felt that she must still yield to the inclinations of those whom it had

hitherto been a dictate of her nature, as well as an obligation of duty, never to disoblige, contradict, or disobey. The lovers had, therefore, been enforced to submit to the seemingly interminable separation of two years and four months, when the unexpected meeting at St. Paul's revived, in the hearts of both, that crouching but not dormant passion which, though it had been subdued for a while, had not by any means lost its energy.

To return to the narrative: the ball at White's was succeeded by other *fêtes* and festivities; for of these there was scarcely any cessation so long as the first capital in the world saw within its lines a crowd of kings, princes, and potentates, assembled from all quarters of the world, from the frozen shores of the northern Baltic, to the sultry plains of the Portuguese Brazils.

Thrown together in the gorgeous throng, and partakers, in part, of this general scene of national festivity, Constance and Dudley rested

happily content in the secure affections of each other. Occasionally, too, they met ; and perhaps the secret unexplained confession, that each was subject to the control of a hostile power, added an interest to the circumstance of their meeting.—Love's natural atmosphere is danger.

In the meanwhile, Dudley had called at Lady Margaret Graham's more than once : the first time he called she was refused, though he knew she was at home ; the next time, he had had the fortune or misfortune to find her in the drawing-room, alone ; and, on the third occasion, he had surprised her in company with a large party of leading fashionables who had been convened together for the purpose of patronising, or, as it may be termed, getting up, a rival concert. Amongst the younger ladies was Constance.

As Dudley's name was announced, Lady Margaret's vivacity of spirit suddenly left her,

for the barometer of her attention rose and fell as her visitors were considered worthy of her attention or not ; and, instead of persevering in her arguments as an authoritative leader, she suddenly broke from the subject under discussion, or agreed, at random, to whatever the coterie chose of themselves to propose.

We live in a jealous state, since we live, for the most part, under the suspicious surveillance of those who take a watchful interest in all the details of our ordinary opinions, conduct, and pursuits ; and Lady Margaret accordingly watched, with lynx eyes and hasty glances, the manner of Dudley and her daughter as they met. In the mean time, the conversation diverged into general topics ; and whether it was now continued upon trifles or not, Lady Margaret was called upon from time to time to perform her part.

Dudley and Constance drew instinctively together ; there was a crowd of troublesome

sofas, chairs, knick-knack tables, trifles affecting to be furniture, in their way, not to mention certain formidable groups of lay-figure visitors: yet they still contrived, nevertheless, to meet. The reminiscences of the past, a fluttering yet fond all-breathing hope of the future, a sympathy, in short, which it is impossible to attempt to explain, affected their hearts, and threw an earnest life into their looks which made *them* poetry in a room full of prose.

Dudley had drawn to a window from one side of the apartment; Constance had approached the same spot from another; they both, doubtless, intended to enter the recess, yet, at the same time, nursed the hope that their mutual intention might appear to be simply the result of accident. But Lady Margaret, who might have proved a match for Argus, here, though with much gentleness, and without apparent premeditation, interfered.

“Constance,” she said, but Constance heard not. “Hem! Constance, do love, go talk to Lady Heavyside for a few minutes — she is going away presently, and it looks so odd to see her seated by herself.”

“But she is so tiresome, mamma,” said the unwilling Constance; “and I have seen so little of her, — compared, mamma, with your experience of her.”

“Well, well, Constance, *as you please*.”

This *as you please*, was a formidable sound to Constance’s ear, since it rather signified, from Lady Margaret’s manner of pronouncing it, to be “*as I please*.”

“I will go, mamma,” said Constance, timidly; and, fearing lest the weight of her mother’s resentment might eventually fall upon her friend and favourite Dudley Ravensworth, added, “which is the Dowager Lady Heavyside?” she was now preparing, and at once to obey, but Lady Margaret, like

another wily Lady Ashton over her modern but not less devoted Lucy, thought proper, at this juncture, to abandon the temporising system, and to resort to one more summary and explicit.

“Mr. Ravensworth,” she was now therefore pleased to say, “my daughter has so many duties to attend to, that I trust, you will in future excuse her absence, and”—*mine* also—were the words that were implied to follow; but Lady Margaret spoke them not. “However, pray don’t leave us,” she added more kindly, seeing that Dudley was preparing to depart. “At any rate, we shall see you at Almack’s on Wednesday night. Lady Hazzleton has promised us tickets;” and in this vague style, partly courteous, partly serenely vindictive, was Dudley dismissed.

Dudley felt satisfied with Constance, and not at all so with her mother. He feared too, at times, lest Constance might be gradually

induced to sever from him. *That*, however, was impossible with Constance; but we must allow something for a lover's fears, since these very fears are but so many proofs of the intensity of love. Fears are the mulberry leaves on which that idle silk-worm, love, feeds. Indeed, Dudley had no small reason to feel himself any thing but *safe*, when opposed in a warfare of interests, with so determined a she-diplomatist as Lady Margaret. In truth, that lady, but half an hour before the appointed levée of visitors, had summoned Sir Alexander to a *tête-a-tête*, which had for its object the future destiny of their daughter and heiress, Constance.

“It occurs to me,” observed Lady Margaret, after making a few desultory introductory observations, ‘too tedious to mention in this advertisement,’ “that Constance is unhappy. She seems dissatisfied with home, and I much fear, entertains an idle hankering

after that good-natured creature, Dudley Ravensworth. Were her thoughts but diverted into a new channel, we might then have hopes of her. Lord Atherley seemed rather to admire her the day he dined here, and he has called I dare say more than three times since, and has sighed twice. *One* visit we may take to ourselves; but the others were meant, I have little doubt, for somebody else. Indeed, he told me, half confidentially, that he hoped for the happiness of a still more intimate acquaintance. A better title, a Marquisate or Dukedom, would have suited *me* (Lady Margaret seemed here to take no account of Constance,) as well; but we cannot fashion every thing to our wishes. I think I should accept his offer; besides the fortune is unexceptionable. Now, pray, Sir Alexander, let me have your advice in all this."

"Why, I really do not exactly know," replied Sir Alexander, in some embarrassment;

‘ I have no objection however, to be guided, by your judgment in the matter ;—you know best.”

“ Yes, very true : but you *must* think for yourself,” returned Lady Margaret, who knew that she should have her own way, only she desired her husband’s name and authority in any affair to which there could be attached anything like responsibility. “ Now, to save all troublesome discussions, pray take care to discourage young Ravensworth, and have Lord Atherley about you as much as you possibly can, without appearing to act from any other motive than what mere chance might dictate. We must have him at Almack’s ; and, to-morrow, too, I think I may venture to take him to Lady Montgomery’s. I’ll write this instant.”

On the following evening Portman Square rattled with carriages. Thither the high-born, the thoughtless, the gay, glided in the circling

throng. The spacious rooms of one of its largest houses were crowded almost to suffocation, dazzling with bright lamps, bright jewels, and still brighter eyes. The drawing-rooms began to blaze

“With lights by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror.”

There was within a lively uproar of music, dancing, and conversation.

Among the many beautiful and admired women present one sat retired — Constance Graham, — evidently anxious to avoid observation. The simplicity and tone (if the word may be used) of her dress were in perfect accordance with the innocence of her air and the thoughtfulness of her countenance. Two persons were close to her, one engaged in conversation with her mother, Lady Margaret, while the other, Lord Atherley, was idling in the net in which he was enmeshed. In a few minutes they were joined by young Ravens-

worth, who, with a look of suppressed excitement, bowed, and stammered out an apology for his intrusion. He coloured, and asked Constance to dance with him. She too blushing, slightly assented.

During the next quarter of an hour the following broken conversation passed between them, interrupted often by the figure of the dance, and the nearness of Lady Margaret Graham and Lord Atherley, who had placed themselves close to the devoted pair.

“Miss Graham—for you will not allow me to call you Constance, I hope you do not regret that I withdrew you from Lord Atherley, his conversation seemed deeply interesting?”

“Indeed, no! He never interests me much. He was discussing the merits of Rossini’s new opera, which for once he admitted was worth the sacrifice of a hurried dinner: this led to one of his gastronomic rhapsodies; but, with all his faults he is very good-natured, and

I never can forget his kindness to poor Alfred."

"Why not add,—and very rich?"

"His riches have no charm for me, as you, Mr. Ravensworth, must know."

"There was a time when I thought so; but one is apt to be deceived in everything."

"You are unjust, nor will I answer your cruel remarks."

"And yet, if you enter into the gaieties of London, and daily meet the rich and rare, is it not possible that I may some day——"

Constance's cheek now flushed; she turned slightly away from her partner, and was silent. In a few minutes she said,

"I will forgive you, and all your error, if you will promise never to say more to me on the subject."

The dance now ended, and Ravensworth, dissatisfied and unhappy, led her to her mother. They were now obliged to separate; Miss Gra-

ham occupied her former seat, and, when asked by Lord Atherley to dance, declined on the plea of fatigue.

Shortly after the party retired, Dudley came forward and handed Constance to the carriage. Lady Margaret coldly wished him good night, and then, turning to her daughter, said with a degree of earnestness,—

“Constance, an end must be put to this. Mr. Ravensworth must find some one else to amuse himself with.”

“Mr. Ravensworth !”

“Yes, Mr. Ravensworth ! I will not suffer my daughter to be made a fool of by this vain young man, and so I shall give him clearly to understand, if ever he shows the slightest indication of repeating his conduct of this evening.”

Constance sighed deeply, but replied not.

“Well,” continued Lady Margaret, “if you allow Mr. Ravensworth to dangle after

you, you will get the name of a flirt, or be looked upon as a forsaken one; and remember, Constance, there can be no greater disadvantage to a girl than to have it supposed her affections have been trifled with."

CHAPTER V.

ALMACK'S.

“ Parents have flinty hearts !
No tears can move them.”

OTWAY.

FORTUNATELY for Lady Margaret and her schemes, she found a willing helpmate in all her undertakings in her husband. Sir Alexander, who was kind whenever he was sincere, returned Lord Atherley's last three calls all at once, found him from home, and repeated the visit within a week. A family dinner was the next thing which Lady Margaret got up, and then she opened her preciously arranged game of chances.

To remedy any obscurity that may attach to this expression, let us explain:—Lady Margaret, then, *chanced* to be going to the Opera on the night that succeeded to her family dinner; she could accommodate Lord Atherley with a seat in her box if he chose, and she resolved to take her daughter that she might have the benefit of a musical lesson. Lady Margaret next *chanced* to promise to patronise a concert, and Lord Atherley had a ticket placed at his disposal. Her next *chance* was to take a bad cold which confined her to her apartments, and left her daughter to do the honors of the table, and maintain the conversation with Lord Atherley, who came to dinner upon a *chance* invitation from Sir Alexander after a visit to the exhibition, and a few turns upon horseback in the park. Lady Margaret's concluding *chance* was to get suddenly quite well again, and to venture to take an airing in a new curricule which Lord Atherley had built,

and, with Lord Atherley himself for her charioteer; and, as a finish to her doctrine of chances, she had Constance set in her place towards the termination of the drive, having *chanced* to forget an appointment with the redoubtable Lady Heavyside, which appointment had had no previous existence.

To one and all of these *chance* manœuvres Lord Atherley had fallen a prey, and the result was, he became their appointed esquire to the forthcoming Almacks. The fact was, he admired Constance Graham. Indeed, he was in indolent love with her, and he followed for her sake in the wake of her mother. Moreover, though there were richer heiresses than Constance Graham, there were few who possessed a long descended family estate. One other motive for Lord Atherley's attachment remained; he thought he had rivals, and it was his desire that he and he alone should carry off the prize. Lady Margaret, too, ever appeared

to him a good-natured, obliging, *simple* minded, woman, and Sir Alexander a man of good honest principles, only a little too generous, at least such were his lordship's impressions of the parties. He now became a frequent visitor in Grosvenor-square, where he dined almost daily. Constance was annoyed at seeing so much of him, and provoked to find herself the object of his attention.

But to the Earl of Atherley, who, according to Boyle, was described as "Earl of Atherley, Grosvenor-square; Compton Audley, Warwickshire; Wingfield Manor House, Hampshire:"—he was a nobleman of very large property and of very limited understanding. He had also the good fortune to be a bachelor of forty; having let that amount of time slip through his fingers,—neither he, nor any one about him could very well tell how. He was, according to the account his friends gave of him, "the most good-natured easy man in the world."

He wished to marry Constance Graham, as has been intimated, partly for love, or what *he* called love, and partly from interest, being desirous of becoming the possessor of the old baronial territory, Graham Castle. He had been a comely youth in his seventeenth year, and had, as the military phrase is, carried his *colours* through ; that is, he retained an unde-throned rosy countenance, under grey hair tending to white : of course there was the usual romantic story, that for love unrequited his hair had undergone a Protean change in one night. Alas ! the only grief that had ever befallen Lord Atherley, was the loss of a horse or dinner, and the failure of a plan, entirely of his own invention, for propelling balloons by the not very aërial means of a steam-engine.

He was one of those *bizarres* mentioned by Madame de Stael, “ à l’égard des femmes, qu’il leur pardonne plutôt de manquer à leurs devoirs,

que d'attirer l'attention par des talens distingués." He studied only, to use a phrase of Dr. Johnson's, "one of the arts that aggrandise life;" viz. Cookery. His *precept* was "In solo vivendi causa palato est;" his *practice*, to devote his best energies to his masticatorial duties. This oracle of culinary love piqued himself in fact upon being a bon vivant; a *gourmet* of taste and sentiment, he possessed "une erudition gastronomique tout a fait effrayante." "Nothing like good eating and drinking to bring out the humanities."

" La table est mon seul amour ;
Manger, chanter, rire et boire,
Voilà mon ordre du jour—"

were his constant themes, and he acted upon the maxim they implied.

The way to his heart, to use a vulgar truism, was through his mouth. He was a ventripotent Apicius, a real epicure ; one who boasted that he never wasted his appetite on a joint. His

life was a confused *mêlée*, being as it were unfixed and without a motive, save in his meals, and there he was rigidly and inflexibly punctual. "The tocsin of the soul, the dinner bell," would at all times rouse him to action. We have now only to sum up this brief account of Lord Atherley by saying, that among the loves of the great—as Alexander loved his horse Bucephalus; Numa a lap-dog; Augustus a parrot; Caligula a horse; Virgil a butterfly; Nero a starling; Commodus an ape; Heliogabalus a sparrow; Honorius a chicken; Baron Trenck a spider—so did Lord Atherley love gastronomy; he discoursed of the science *de gueule* with as much gravity as if he was speaking of theology; he reversed the saying of Moliere's miser, "Il faut manger pour vivre et non pas vivre pour manger;" and with some slight variation realised the line which the Roman epigrammatist has so pithily described—

“Prandeo, poto, cano, ludo, (not much of the lego)
Coeno, quiesco.”

“The noblest study of mankind is man.” Lord Atherley studied man, and that man was himself.

Dudley in the mean time forebore to pay Lady Margaret any more morning calls; his reception had been upon the last occasion, according to her ladyship’s own phraseology, “the north side of friendly;” and he therefore determined to await either Sir Alexander’s return call, or some invitation to join Lady Margaret’s evening circle. But he waited in vain; no card from that quarter came to relieve the dull monotony of his present life; and it would seem that both Sir Alexander and Lady Margaret, despite their personal good inclination towards himself, had made up their minds to forget and to forsake him. Their desertion was mortifying at any time; but as it closed the path by which he could

still hope to see and to converse with Constance, his solitude was distressed by impatient and vexatious reflections. At Almack's, however, he should meet the party; Constance might dance with him—he might again talk to her—he might again look upon her. In the course of the night he might be able to learn something of her mother's real disposition towards him. At all events he should pass the evening in the happy wealth of present bliss. The mother of Constance had said something, which he had heard but indistinctly, about her daughter's duties; but at a ball, where people meet to dance, there could be no more real or feigned apologies.

Alas, poor Dudley! he knew not what the activity of Lady Margaret had within ten short days of Almack's ball brought about. He knew not what a hungry lion wandered in the path, in the shape of good comfortable eating and feasting, Lord Atherley. He knew not that

Constance, somewhat unexpectedly brought into every-day contact with a man whom her father and mother invariably and actively flattered and caressed, found herself entangled by invisible strings, from which in vain could she shake herself free. To Almack's, however, he went; it was his forlorn hope, and all his happiness was ventured upon the success or disappointment of the wished-for night. Almack's! what magic is in thy name! what a sway and importance does it exercise over the fashionable world! its origin is incidentally noticed by Horace Walpole, "There is a new institution which begins to make, and if it proceeds will make a considerable noise. It is a club of both sexes, to be erected at Almack's, on the mode of that of the men at White's. Mrs. Fitzroy, Lady Pembroke, Mrs. Leynall, and Miss Lloyd are the patronesses."

"What's in a name?" With what power-

ful emotion does many a fair bosom beat at the mention of Almack's?

In what clime can be seen a more radiant assemblage of rank, of beauty, and of fashion than grace these rooms? No one ever yet stood "amidst the glittering throng," and saw the galaxy of fair women shine around,—the beautiful faces and noble forms of England's sons and daughters, without feeling assured that more beauty met the gaze at once than could be found together in any other part of the globe.

It has been the fate of the ladies patronesses to be attacked from many quarters, and abuse has been heaped upon the institution. These attacks are natural enough, emanating, as they do, from disappointed parties. Though the power which the *administration* possess is absolute, and without appeal, it is seldom exercised in a capricious manner. Much has been said of the "despotism of the auto-

cratesses," of their personal dislikes, political biases, individual prejudices and partialities. But how can these influence their decision, unless, indeed, under a coalition cabinet? Their office is no sinecure; the trouble of opening, reading, and replying to, a host of applications is enough to try the patience of less irritable beings than lady patronesses.

And what has made "Almack's?" Fashion! Fashion!—a varnish which is much used for the purpose of imparting a false gloss. It is like most other varnishes,—of a poisonous nature; and produces the strangest effects upon the unhappy persons who use it. It causes "their tapers to burn to bedwise" when the sun rises. It occasions them to come to town for the winter at the sweet season when spring smiles in all her charms, and to go into the country for the summer just as the fall of the fallow leaf gives notice of the approach of winter. It makes them do many things that are ex-

tremely painful to them, and deters them from the pursuit of quiet, heartfelt enjoyment, from a dread of its petrifying dulness. Yes! the fascination of fashion is irresistible. Whether in patronising lectures on chemistry, animal magnetism, opera singers or dancers, fancy fairs, popular preachers, or industrious fleas; it deprives them of the power of seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling, reasoning, or deciding for themselves, and compels them to see, hear, taste, feel, reason, and decide as others do.

But to return to Dudley. By some mischance he found that he had set out too soon for Almack's, and in order to avoid the tedium of waiting till others should arrive, he drove round by one of the principal theatres, into which he looked. The consequence was, that where he wished to touch time to the moment, he arrived too late; at any rate he was amongst the very latest. When he entered

the larger room, Constance, Miss Cressingham, Lady Margaret, and Lord Atherley were together in a group, looking on upon the dancers. Constance was simply yet superbly dressed, and Lady Margaret appeared in a sort of tiara of diamonds of the larger size, admirably fashioned. The party too were evidently in high spirits; and, to the consternation of Dudley, Constance laughed and talked, while she depended on the arm of Lord Atherley, who, if he had not, according to his own phraseology, "discussed claret enough to float a man of war," had discussed that which seemingly inspired him with spirits alive enough to affect love.

Dudley advanced towards the party, uncertain for the first time what might be his particular reception. The eyes of Lady Margaret wandered in every direction save towards him; though she had watched him from the first. Lord Atherley had seen him, but he thought it

better to keep Constance herself engaged till Dudley should absent himself. Constance's glance retained its usual kindly feeling, and, re-assured by her look, Dudley made direct for the party. Lady Margaret recognised him frankly enough, though she suffered him to approach almost close to her before she condescended to acknowledge him; fortunately, at that moment her attention was called away by a young French count, who was bowing and smiling, and uttering *mille graces*, and who, mistaking Lord Atherley for a relation, begged to be presented to my Lord Atherley.

Dudley approached Constance. He attempted to converse with his customary *ease*. She answered with embarrassment.

"Give me that bouquet you wear," said Ravensworth in a low voice, "in return for the one I presented to you last week."

With some hesitation she complied; yet she looked around that her mother's vigilant eye

might not observe her, and, taking it from her bosom, she gave it tremblingly into his hands. Lady Margaret now turned, and motioned Lord Atherley away, who immediately led Constance a promenade of the rooms.

At this moment the approach of several persons caused Dudley to give way, and he drew back,—leaving Lady Margaret to her newly-acquired friend. In the mean time several sets of dances had been performed, and the ball “rolled on;” but all seemed heat and glare, pain and oppression to Dudley; who felt his spirits broken, his hopes disheartened, except at times when they rose in the agony of positive desperation to something like the heedless reckless resolution of the madman. His tortures were destined however to be still further increased, when he saw Constance herself stand up to a quadrille, having by her side Lord Atherley.

“She is dancing to-night then,” said Dudley

almost aloud, for he knew not at first what rules Lady Margaret had laid down for her daughter's conduct on the occasion. "Now then," he said, "'if heart *be* heart,' she will dance with me;" and just as the dance terminated he advanced directly to her, and made the request. Lord Atherley compressed his under lip, a visible sign with him of more than ordinary impatience. But the fears of Lord Atherley were unnecessary; Constance had already received her lesson.

"I am engaged, Mr. Ravensworth," she said, looking down.

"And to whom?" said Dudley, in a voice now subdued by excitement, driven as it were out of all the etiquette of society by the tortures he had endured.

"I mean," returned Constance, "that I shall not dance in the next set,—indeed, Mr. Ravensworth, to-night you must excuse me."

She would have added more,—but Lord

Atherley, with a scarcely suppressed sneer, here interfered, and led her, seemingly not unwilling, away from the spot.

“Am I upon the earth?” was the exclamation that involuntarily broke from Dudley, as the fond idol of his thoughts retreated without explanation, and even without apology, from his sight. “By heavens, some one must answer for this!” But the paroxysm of rage ended with the exclamation, and he remained pale and trembling, motionless as a statue, amidst the happy groups who neared and then disappeared from time to time before him.

“Had Sir Alexander ordered all this? Was he here? or was it the false fair one Lady Margaret with whom he had just exchanged the compliments of the evening, with all the apparent candour of a faithful well-wisher? or did Lord Atherley take upon himself to order that he should be repulsed?” It may be supposed that his wrath against Constance for

trifling with his feelings was unappeased and unappeasable. The more he dwelt upon the difference of her behaviour in their preceding meetings, the more angry as well as amazed he became at the change. No explanation of her conduct had been attempted. The multitude of his suspicions tended however to confuse his judgment, and he could only abandon himself to the misery of his present emotions, without endeavouring to do anything that might relieve him from the distractions that oppressed him.

There is nothing so uncongenial to the sorrowing heart as boisterous gaiety and mirth ; yet for a whole hour he remained gazing upon the figures of the dancers, as if they had been the phantasmagoria sometimes described in a magic lantern ; the music, beautiful as it was, sounded more like a dirge for departed happiness than as a symbol of pleasure and rejoicing. Whether Constance danced or did

not dance, was now of no moment to Dudley ; his eyes seemed immovable in his head, and burned with a heat which was almost excruciatingly painful.

The ball had now, however, begun to thin, the musicians' notes became faint and languid ; the wearied smile of the few remaining dancers showed evident signs of the lateness of the hour ; and Dudley, seeing all hope of favour at an end, turned with a stupified sensation of mingled sickness and grief to depart. He was passing onwards to the head of the stairs, the intoxicating strains of Weippert's inspiring harp had just ceased, when a soft voice whispered " Mr. Ravensworth !" In an instant the tempest ceased ; he looked up and beheld Constance, who, under the pretext of getting her handkerchief, which she had dropped, had separated herself from her mother. Overpowered by a thousand feelings, it was some little time before she could attempt

to speak. She looked round, as if to see that no one was near her, and then said, or rather stammered, "I cannot now attempt to explain. You know what feelings I always have with you, but ——"

"Why so you say, Miss Graham?" said Dudley peevishly; "but really I begin to doubt your assertion. For you have always some excuse for not dancing with me."

"Now this reproach is unkind."

"Yet, nevertheless, it is true. There was a time, and not very distant either, when you gave me to understand you did not care about Lord Atherley; but wealth ——"

"Do not — oh, do not be unjust!" replied Constance in an agitated manner; "I cannot bear it! I must go away,—you mistrust me."

While they talked, Lady Margaret and Lord Atherley approached. There was no time for further remark or explanation.

"Say you forgive me," said Dudley, the

deep low tone of his voice almost sinking to a whisper, as he drew back to let her pass.

The carriage was announced. “Constance, my love, take Lord Atherley’s arm; get into the carriage, or they will drive off. We can take you home, Lord Atherley. Not the least crowded. We must set Mary down first in Palace Yard. My dear Mr. Ravensworth, I entreat you to come to my assistance. My cloak and shawl, No. 134. How very kind of you!”

Dudley, at that moment, was meditating how he could approach Constance. Lady Margaret’s quick eye marked his discomfiture. To leave her and Miss Cressingham was out of the question; he was forced to offer his arm. Lord Atherley and Constance were at the bottom of the stairs, as the remainder of the party advanced. “Lady Margaret Graham’s carriage stops the way!” echoed through footmen, constables, and link-boys. The carriage

being ready, Lord Atherley handed Constance in. It was impossible for her to hazard a remark without the certainty of being overheard by her mother or Lord Atherley. A low murmur of "how unkind!" reached her ears, but it was drowned by the impatient coachman making his horses' feet paw the ground to be gone.

Dudley, agitated, mortified, and grieved at having parted without one word of explanation or kindness, remained for a moment at the door. Constance,—her face averted and tongue motionless,—had sunk back in a corner of the carriage for a moment overcome; then, reproaching herself for her apparent sullenness in having thus parted without taking leave, looked out anxious to recall her self-imagined unkind conduct, but it was too late. Dudley had turned away, and the horses were in motion. Constance continued to look—but in vain. She felt angry at heart, at having exposed herself to the harsh opinion

of one she valued, and the depressed Lady Margaret gave a loose current to her thoughts.

A stillness of some minutes ensued, during which Constance saw Lady Margaret's countenance assume a severe aspect ; at last in a voice of suppressed passion she said, " some different understanding with Mr. Ravensworth must be adopted to that you have pursued to-night ; to-morrow in my dressing-room I will speak to you on the subject."

CHAPTER VI.

RETURN FROM ALMACK'S — GAMING HOUSE.

And if angels, trumpet-tongued, had told you I was false, you should not have believed it.

EVADNE.

ON Ravensworth's return from Almack's, it was already broad daylight, though nothing was to be heard but the hoarse tone of a stray, half-sleeping watchman, and the occasional rattle of a carriage, or rumble of a coach, whose jaded horses were lazily dragging some drowsy senator from the oft-repeated, nocturnal wrangle of St. Stephen's,

to his whist club, through the now dreary and almost deserted streets, a solitary, bare-legged, half-naked chimney-sweep was crawling along, with brush in hand and soot bags on his back, emitting "S-w-e-e-p," with a melancholy tone that struck the heart, — now a train of market-carts might be seen wending their way towards that great congress of the vegetable world, Covent Garden.

Dudley, who felt too much excited to seek the solitude of his wakeful pillow, rambled through the park, musing on the brilliant scene he had just left, now calculating the hours that must elapse before the next opera night or French play, when he should have a chance of seeing his "ladye love." On reaching Piccadilly, his attention was unexpectedly, and somewhat forcibly arrested, by a miserable, half-starved looking creature, who, making a sudden halt directly before him, snatched the bouquet

from his breast, ere he had time to prevent her.

“It’s a pretty flower, and still fresh,” she said, holding it aside from the reach of Dudley : “but it will soon fade, like all the rest ! but, here it ’s for you, Dudley Ravensworth, if you ’ll bid money for it ;” and she looked the “excellent wretch” which love but too often makes of its infatuated devotees.

Dudley, though somewhat startled at his own name thus openly pronounced, and by one “so whistled down the wind to prey at fortune” by some despoiler,—attempted to move on, when the wretched girl, uttering a shrill and most agonising scream, exclaimed—

“Ay ! but the time was when you would not have passed Jane Ashford, like a thing forsaken. But then it was where trees grew, and streams ran, and not in the stony-hearted streets !”

On hearing a name once sufficiently familiar to him, (for the Ashfords were tenants of Sir Alexander Graham,) Dudley made a dead halt, and, in the haggard figure before him, bedizened, as it was, with scanty and faded finery, which ill concealed the misery of her condition, — he recognised Isaac Ashford's daughter, Jane. Her face, indeed, despite its hollow eye, shrunken cheek, and shrivelled lips, showed that it had once possessed great beauty; but her scanty and tawdry apparel, already dripping in the drizzle of a rain which now began to fall, gave token of her present degradation, abandonment, and wretchedness.

Ashamed to be seen in company with one who, in addition to the squalid character of her appearance, seemed also to be labouring under the effects of recent inebriation, Dudley pulled out his purse and tablets, and, having given her some silver, was in

the act of taking down her address, — having, already, promised to call or send to her, — when, to his utter horror and dismay, the carriage of Lady Margaret Graham drove close to the spot where he and his disreputable acquaintance stood. It was in vain, therefore, for him to have attempted to make his escape from the prying, and, it must be confessed, somewhat astonished eyes of the party the carriage contained, however fervently he might have, on the instant, prayed for such a deliverance.

Already, and even before he could recognise whose carriage it was, Lady Margaret's quick eye had detected him in close converse with the outcast being we have just described, — and had let down the glass; and Constance's face, paler than usual, was next to be seen, looking at him with an expression of countenance which betrayed the agitation into which his appearance had thrown her. As the

carriage passed, she first looked anxiously to see if it was really him, and then fell back suddenly in her seat, apparently senseless. Lady Margaret, however, determined to keep her 'vantage ground ; she hastily pulled the string, and the horses were stopped. Dudley rushed forward to the carriage, just as Constance was gradually beginning to revive. But his services, whether in time or not, were not, it seems, to be accepted ; for Lady Margaret, with a voice almost unnaturally wild with anger, now requested Mr. Ravensworth not to insult them by calling the attention of all that was depraved to them.

Dudley tried to stammer out an apology ; but, at this very moment, his attention was called to a knot of hackney-coachmen, who, hustling round Jane, were in the act of endeavouring to deprive her of the money he had given her. Lady Margaret, therefore, desired the coachman to drive on ; and,

as they once more set forward, Constance gave a look, sad and reproachful, at Dudley, who, reckless of the consequences, had sprung to save Jane from the licensed depredators surrounding her.

After giving her over to the care of a watchman, Dudley, half-frantic at the possible consequences of the night's adventure, and bewildered with the thoughts of his own seeming depravity in the eyes of one who was the dearest and purest, turned away, and carried a distracted heart to a solitary home.

Shame, terror, and dismay, by turns, occupied Dudley's mind, as, pale, haggard, and exhausted, he strolled down St. James's Street, his eyes fixed despondingly on the pavement. He had not courage to enter his house; all disturbed, he could make up his mind to no resolution. He thought over the scene he had lately witnessed, recalling

to his mind, with fearful perspicuity, every circumstance connected with its mortifying and disagreeable details. While thus musing, he came in personal contact with a young man, muffled up in a military cloak, who, rushing out of a club-house, nearly threw down the abstracted lover.

“Sir!” cried Ravensworth, “do you mean to insult me?”

“A thousand pardons,” said the stranger meekly,—who was in fact the aggressor—and dropping his cloak.

“What, Harry Percival, my dear fellow!” exclaimed Dudley, holding out his hand to him. “I did not know that you were in London. When came you here?”

“I only arrived last night—ordered to join; but how fares it, Dudley? I thought we should never meet again. How very melancholy you look! in love or in debt?—

a Jew or a girl? — which is the harder-hearted?”

“A truce to your railleries; this is no time for them. Dine with me to-morrow, at seven, at the Clarendon,” said Dudley.

“Agreed,” replied Harry Percival: “but where do you lodge? — let us walk part of the way together?”

They walked together some moments in silence. Harry Percival laughed and jested with Dudley on his gravity; declared he was the dullest companion he had ever met, and vowed that there could be nothing more tiresome than a man in love.

Dudley assured him that such was not the case; a thousand things tended to make him low-spirited.

“Why what can depress you?” continued Harry, in a tone of raillery; “you with fair prospects: I, on the other hand, with no in-

come at all, but with debts, thick as the leaves that strew Mr. Milton's celebrated vale of Valambrosa. Talking of debts, I want your assistance, you will be an admirable witness: your sedate manner will just do. Do you know, Dudley, a rascally keeper of the infernal regions gave me a bad bill last night? Come in while I change it. Here's the house," he added, stopping at a door, over which a brilliant light, reflecting a No. 6, as big as a racket, "whose oily rays, shot from the crystal lamp," contrasted strongly with the dim appearance of the ill-lighted streets, for, in those days, oil had not succumbed to the supremacy of gas. People were then content to be but moderately enlightened

At length they neared the interior of this second hall of Eblis, this infamous nocturnal receptacle for the most abandoned iniquity, where the arch fiend holds his horrid rites,

and feasteth on the destruction of his votaries. "*Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis.*" But we will not attempt to describe the mysteries of this iniquitous sink of pollution, where every angry and selfish passion is fed; where all that is useful, honourable, honest, and generous is extinguished; where every principle of active and disinterested kindness is violated; for its progress commences in idleness or avarice, proceeds in injustice, and terminates in inextricable despair.

Who can pourtray the various implements of ruin, or paint the ministers of vengeance glaring destruction at each other? What language can speak the deformity of nature, whilst every passion of the soul is upon the rack; the trembling anxiety of hope, the chilling damp of fear, fluctuating between the desperate alternative of impending affluence or of helpless beggary?—the wild and savage exultation, the ill-concealed triumph of the suc-

cessful ; the deep dismay, the curses, not loud, but deep, the half-suppressed oath, the cheek of livid paleness of the fallen ; some, like raging waters, foaming out their own shame in frantic oaths and execrations, others riveted to earth in the deep silence of unutterable despair ! Now is the wretched victim creeping homeward, reluctantly to pour into the ears of his wife the agonising tale of ruin. Mark his angry glance, his distorted countenance, his phrenzied agony ! How he starts ! His thought is the one that stings to madness. Then comes the cruel spoiler, flushed with the gain and glory of conquest. But envy him not : the bitter reflection that the misery of others has wrought his greatness “ will put rancour in the vessel of his peace,” and soon “ commend the ingredients of the poisoned chalice to his own lips.”

The room in which Dudley found himself was ill-lighted, for, in those days, Vice had

not become so illustrious, and required not a palace for her residence. The dingy walls and barred windows formed a *locale* well adapted to the things of crime and wretchedness with which it was filled. His blood ran cold, as he listened to the execrations that fell from the profane lips of those who, hardened by reckless vice, were staking all on "the hazard of the die."

Dudley, disgusted at finding himself in this dismal den of depravity, was about to depart, when a sudden and vehement uproar at the door announced to him the arrival of the Bow Street officers. In an instant the candles were extinguished, and the infatuated crew made a general rush for escape: but the attempt was fruitless; Dudley, with his companions in disgrace, was carried off by the invaders, and passed the remainder of the night, or rather morning, in the watch-house. Dudley's appearance, his evening's dress somewhat disarranged,

was sufficiently forlorn : when brought up before the magistrate, those who were considered as players were dismissed with a caution : the owners were held to bail.

Dudley and Harry Percival, we may here explain, were acquaintances of some standing : they had entered Westminster at the same time, and having afterwards been thrown together at the houses of mutual friends and acquaintances, their boyish correspondence had been still permitted to continue. It has been said that people often love those who are in everything opposed to themselves, and this was true with respect to Percival and Dudley. Dudley was of a domestic disposition, and in the society of those whom he esteemed he found his happiness complete ; while Percival, as the gaming transaction may have already intimated, was of a reckless and hardy nature—careless of consequences, and one who ran neck or nothing into at least a few of the dissipations

of the day. Such as he was, however, he somehow or another 'held a place in Dudley's good graces ; and, indeed, he partly deserved this preference, since, whatever might be his faults, he was ever ready to stand fast in every extremity for a friend. He was, however, on the occasion of their present meeting half inclined to reform, having just entered the Guards ; but his intended reformation from his follies,—of which a visit to the gaming table had been the chief, was too late to be of any use to his friend. Dudley, while still smarting from the pain occasioned by Lady Margaret's contempt, and Constance's still more afflicting dismay at seeing him with Jane Ashford,—had the satisfaction of reading the next day, the following appalling paragraph :—

“GAMBLING IN HIGH LIFE.”

“In consequence of private information being laid before Mr. Birnie at the public office, Bow Street, that gambling was carried on at a house in Pall Mall, his worship issued warrants for searching it. At a late hour on Wednesday night last, a large party of constables, and a number of the patrol, went to the house, and contrived to gain admittance by a back door. A company of about twenty gentlemen, assembled for the purpose of gambling, were taken by the officers to St. James's watch-house. Yesterday the parties attended before Mr. Birnie the sitting magistrate, when some were discharged, and the rest admitted to bail; among the former were Dudley Ravensworth Esq., son of Sir Francis Ravensworth, Bart., and H. Percival, Esq., Gds.”

Dudley threw himself on his couch ; his long and tedious morning gave him ample time “ to chew the cud of bitter fancies.” At length, he determined to present himself at Lady Margaret’s as early as possible in the day, and, one o’clock having arrived, he sprang into his Tilbury, and drove there with the utmost speed. On reaching the square, fear of ills to come made him reluctant to approach the door. At last, with a strong effort, he raised the knocker, the feeble irresolute rap was in unison with the doubtful uncertainty of his mind ; it was tardily obeyed by the porter, who disturbed at his dinner was some time before he answered a knock of so unimportant a character.

“ Is Lady Margaret at home ? ” inquired Ravensworth, in a low voice.

“ Mylady is at home, sir, but not well enough to receive any visitors. There was a note, sir, for you, which Miss Graham’s maid desired

might be sent early. "John!" addressing a half yawning footman, who from his appearance seemed to have emulated his prototype Sir Harry of "High life below stairs" celebrity in a "devil of a debauch" the evening before; "John! was Miss Graham's note left at Mr. Ravensworth's?"

"I really can't say, it's William's business; I only attend to her ladyship," replied the powder-headed, insolent knight of the shoulder knot.

This led to a skirmish of words between the two domestics.

Dudley was too much engrossed by his own thoughts to pay any attention to the above dialogue. His hopes seemed crushed; he threw down a card, and hastily quitted the door: to wait with patience for the following morning, which was the earliest period he could again present himself, was a resolve more easily made than performed.

Dudley returned home. For hours did he pace his apartment, discolouring his thoughts with the mischances of the previous night, and trying in vain to hope that fortune, under whose caprices he had suffered, would afford him an early opportunity of “explaining.”

At three o'clock his servant entered with a salver bearing a scented satin-paper note, sealed with a delicate seal. The handwriting was not unknown to him. He looked at the note, first at the seal, then at the direction, surmising and apprehending what might be the contents, and with a painful fear to know them. At length he broke the little dot of wax, and read these few brief words addressed to himself:—

“After what occurred last Wednesday night, you will not be surprised that I am impelled to return your presents, which I am painfully sensible I ought never to

have accepted. I feel that a disregard of a dear mother's advice brings its own just punishment. Henceforth, we must be what the world calls 'friends.' That you may be happy will ever be the wish of

“ CONSTANCE GRAHAM.”

CHAPTER VII.

VISIT AND DEATH OF JANE ASHFORD.

Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy !
Sure these denote one universal joy !
Are these thy serious thoughts ? Ah ! turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shiv'ring female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distress ;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn ;
Now lost to all, her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores the luckless hour,
When, idly, first ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel, and robes of country brown.

GOLDSMITH.

JANE ASHFORD was the daughter of respectable parents. Her father, Isaac Ashford, had

been for many years gamekeeper to Sir Alexander Graham. She had been tenderly reared and educated in the family of the Grahams, who, shortly after her mother's death, provided her with a situation in the establishment of a respectable milliner. Ashford was doubtless fond of his daughter; but he was by nature a stern man, and Jane lived more in awe than love of him. She was unhappy enough to attract the attention of an officer quartered in the neighbourhood.

It is a grateful theme to speak of woman in her purity, diffusing happiness, tempering the rude nature of man; but it is lamentable to think of her as the crushed flower on the path of innocence. Yet such was Jane's fate. She was a confiding, credulous being, and too soon forgot the precepts of her mother, and the kindness of her benefactress, Constance. The pair had met in secret; and these clandestine meetings, which began in mere gaiety

on her part, ended in bringing her to shame and disgrace. Under a promise of marriage, and confiding implicitly in the man who had appeared the most generous and disinterested of her friends, she had at first listened, and at last yielded to his base seductions; and she fled, lost and distracted, from her father's house to the care of her reckless betrayer. The consequence of her fatal love became but too soon apparent; and the affection and attention of him to whom she had sacrificed purity and peace diminished in proportion to the advanced claim which her hapless situation made upon them. Hers was but one of the many cases of unescaped perils of women, the result of which Crabbe with all his truth and pathos so well describes:—

“Then came the day of shame, the grievous night,
The varying look, the wandering appetite,
The joy assumed while sorrow dimm'd the eyes,
The forced sad smiles that follow'd sudden sighs;
And every art long used, but used in vain,
To hide thy progress, Nature, and thy pain.”

Isaac Ashford, with a heart broken in its pride, demanded justice of the spoiler, who basely denied his guilt, and, hinting suspicions of another lover, recommended him to urge his daughter to espouse one who ought to save her character by making her a wife.

The demand of reparation by such a marriage was scornfully disdained. In the meantime the beguiler, who was a handsome young man, talked to Jane of love and marriage, professed the most ardent devotion, vowed constancy and fidelity, and promised to marry her at the death of his father.

The lover,—if such a title may be abused,—the creature that had betrayed this poor girl, departed, imploring her to be patient, and pledged himself speedily to return, and fulfil his word — a word, broken when it was given.

Days, weeks, and months stole on. She became a mother without a mother's honoured name. She lived upon hope, that the next

and the next day would bring her her heart's restoration; but it came not; and when does Time persuade Happiness not to use its wings?

“Where time has ploughed, there misery loves to sow.”

Jane awoke from the long delirium, and contemplated with horror the prospect of her future life; she twice wrote imploringly to her seducer, but never received an answer; her importunities had made him angry. She applied in person to his father, but was driven from the house with brutal coldness; when she reached her father's roof, it was a roof for her no longer; she was refused admittance — her good name gone! her care an Ossa pile upon her heart!

Without home, without friends, the wretched girl wandered forth upon a wide world, with poverty for her companion — misery for her guide,—and death for her only friend at the end of travel!

“ Throughout the lanes she glides at evening’s close,
And softly lulls her infant to repose ;
Then sits and gazes, but with viewless look,
As gilds the moon, the rippling of the brook ;
And sings her vespers, but in voice so low,
She hears their murmurs as the waters flow ;
And she too murmurs, and begins to find
The solemn wanderings of a wounded mind :
Visions of terror, views of woe succeed
The mind’s impatience to the body’s need ;
By turns to that, by turns to this, a prey,
She knows what reason yields, and dreads what madness
may.”

Shortly after this period, Ashford quitted the neighbourhood, and took a small farm on the borders of Essex ; part of the property that had been Lady Margaret Graham’s marriage portion. Here he broke out into every species of dissipation. Fairs, bull-baits, the cock-pit, race-courses, gaming-booths, pot-houses became his constant haunts ; in a few months he was nearly penniless. The farmhouse fell into a dilapidated state, — the windows became broken, and stopped with old

rags and paper; and it was clear that the “palsied hand of ruin was upon the house.” The farm-house was neglected; great crops of thistles and weeds were its produce. Barn-doors broken off, fences pulled down, met the eye at every turn.

Fortunately for Ashford, there resided in his parish a pastor, a faithful pastor, one of the most kind-hearted and pious individuals of whom the church of England had cause to boast; the Reverend Mr. Palmeter. He was not only on the sabbath-day a clergyman, but was the minister of God seven days in the week; daily and hourly was he employed in his Christian duties, visiting the sick and distressed. He had been made acquainted with the cause of Ashford’s misery, and had done all in his power to alleviate it. He had in a great measure reclaimed the wretched man, now suffering under illness brought on by his intemperate habits. Upon Dudley’s discovery

of Ashford's daughter, he had addressed the clergyman, who lost no time in urging the miserable father to accompany him to London.

It was on the evening of a dirty, drizzling, rainy day, when the dusk was just closing in, that Ravensworth, accompanied by Isaac Ashford, left his cabriolet in Long Acre, and proceeded on foot through a maze of dark and winding courts, lanes, and alleys, to within a very short distance of Drury Lane. They went on in profound silence. Nothing could exceed the filth and misery of the alley they had now entered. The houses were a closely-packed double row of miserable dwellings, crowded to excess by a population chiefly composed of the lowest class of Irish. The windows were broken, dismal, and patched. The gutter, impure and choked up, filled the jaded atmosphere with noisome odours. Poles, with lines for drying clothes, projected across the court,

on which were hanging the ragged garments of the impoverished inhabitants. One solitary lamp, cased round with wire-work to prevent its constant breakage, cast a dim light upon the narrow pavement. Here some half-naked children and famished cats and curs were groveling in dirt and play; there, on the cold, damp door-step, might be seen some wild and houseless women, in the last stage of human misery, premature victims of vice and profligacy; torrents of vituperation poured from their lips, and a shout of drunken mirth ever and anon issued from more than one den of depravity. A low, half-stifled moan of some famished mother, and her sickly infant clamouring for bread, was now caught, and the curses of the *husband* and *father* broke forth with the fever-lust of drink raging in his brain and red encircled eye, as he staggered out to spend his wife's hard earnings at the gin-shop. Shrieking, roaring, swearing, and sounds of quarrel-

ling, in the madness of outrageous drunkenness, issued from every quarter.

“The house should be somewhere here,” said Dudley, consulting his tablets, and rapping loudly at a crazy door. There was no answer. He repeated the knocking, and began to imagine the house to be totally uninhabited, when he perceived the glimmering of a light through the crevice of a window.

“Holloa ! Who’s there ?” cried a voice from above. “Don’t stand knocking ! Come in.”

Ravensworth, now perceiving that the door stood ajar, pushed it open, and, followed by Ashford, proceeded to grope the way down a broken stair to a back out-house on the ground floor, and from which a small flickering light glimmered through the crannies. They were within a step or two of the door, when a miserable and emaciated girl came forth.

“Are you the gentlemen that were expected?” said the girl.

“Yes—yes!” replied Ravensworth.

“This way, please sir.”

“Mary!” cried a voice gruffly, and which Dudley recognised as the one that had addressed him from the window, “go in. Give me the candle. I’ll go and talk to the *gentlemen*.”

A glance sufficed to convince Ravensworth that the expression of vulgar defiance, the dogged look, the air of obstinate determination, marked him as the “superior” of this monastery of misery.

“My good man, we wish to see your lodger, Mrs. Richards,” said Dudley, in a tone of conciliation.

“See her! first pay her lodging—two weeks’ rent due,” replied the man.

“Here,” said Ravensworth, taking out his purse; “what’s your demand?”

“Why,” replied the man, “rent, board, firing, medicine—a pound will do it.”

“There, then, take it, and let us see her.”

“Well, walk on; but you may as well pay for her funeral at once, for she’s as good as dead,” replied the unfeeling villain, still eyeing Ravensworth’s purse.

Disgusted with the ruffian’s brutal demeanour, he hastily entered the cellar, when a scene of wretchedness presented itself that baffles description. The cutting easterly wind knifed its way through the dilapidated walls (which were here and there darkened with spots of damp) of a bare and miserable room, destitute of furniture; the rain beat through the broken casement, while a woful fire of two damp logs, portions of an old water-tub, gave no warmth to the decay. A rushlight stuck in a bottle threw a faint flicker over the chamber, adding to, rather than diminishing, its air of desolation. A woman, the owner of the

house, who seemed completely soured by poverty, was warming some gruel, while her two squalid children were quarrelling for a piece of most ancient bread.

In one corner, extended upon a miserable pallet, covered with a blanket of unspeakable hue, Ashford beheld his daughter, pale and emaciated ! Death was plainly at “ her side ! ” The melancholy change which illness had occasioned had scarcely left a trace of her former beauty ; and those charms, which had been so strikingly and fatally attractive, were no longer visible to human eyes. Disease and want were graven on her countenance, and she was cold, white, and inanimate as a statue. There was a silence of some minutes, and at length a partial consciousness came faintly over her. She knew the presence of her parent.

“ Oh, my injured father ! ” feebly exclaimed the dying Jane, “ can you forgive the wretch who has occasioned you all this ? — all — all

this? and look with kindness on your abandoned child? Yes," continued she, gasping as she faintly uttered those words,—“ I see that I am pardoned; but tell me, father, what may I hope for from that awful tribunal to which I am hastening? Is there mercy for a late penitent? ”

The afflicted man attempted to compose and soothe her. Her eyes rekindled for a moment; she seized his hand, and pressed it fervently against her bosom; her breathing became more difficult, her hands more cold; the poor thing gradually relaxed her hold, and falling back, seemed with one low sad long breath, to sigh herself from a world which had been so long deaf to her.

Dudley, leaving Ashford with his dead child, had just reached the end of the alley, when a gust of wind, carrying with it a mass of dust and rubbish, induced him suddenly to turn round to avoid the nuisance. While thus

standing, he fancied he perceived the figures of two men, who, to all appearance were dodging his steps. Recommencing his walk with a sensation somewhat of alarm, and anxious to ascertain the fact, Ravensworth every now and then turned his head to see if he was followed, when to his great annoyance he perceived that his undesirable companions still maintained the same distance from him, as when he first observed them. Passing on with speed, he made towards the spot where he had left his cabriolet; but with difficulty he unwound the tangled alleys and passages which led to it. Now and then a solitary lamp shewed him his followers, in whom vice and ruffianism were written in characters not to be misunderstood or mistaken.

They approached him, and before he could call for assistance, or prepare for defence of himself, he found that he was encircled by a pair of athletic arms, and that other hands

were busy about his pockets. So sudden and effectual was the attack, that even had Ravensworth been prepared, it would have been impossible to have resisted. In a moment his watch and purse were seized. At that instant two officers of the night approached and secured one of the assailants, but not until after a severe struggle.

The following afternoon, the newspapers, after giving the police report, indulged in remarks upon the aristocratic pursuits of Dudley Ravensworth, Esq., in Giblett Alley :— hinting that a certain frail fair one was the *Circé* that attracted him there, and winding up the coloured details with the usual moral reflections on the dangers attendant upon the but too prevalent habits of depravity, amongst those whose education and station in life should lead to better and purer pursuits. This, his second appearance under disgraceful circumstances in a public newspaper, completed Dud-

ley's apparent disgrace. He had intended to give Lady Margaret, and, in particular, he had intended to offer Constance an explanation of his meeting with Jane Ashford; and he had hoped to have modified the indignation of the one, as well as re-assured the shattered confidence of the other, by an honest detail of the circumstances. But Constance's note, and the publicity of the gambling events, overturned all his resolutions; he appeared to himself to be too far lost in the estimation of the Grahams to hope to effect an impression upon them, feeling that they must consider him both abandoned and degraded. What, therefore, was left to him? He could not rest in England. In other scenes he felt that he must seek relief from the aspersions which had been cast upon his character; and though he yielded to the conviction, that happiness was not to be connected with his fate,—he could better bear the land and the society of strangers, than to

remain where he might encounter only those who would avoid and despise him. Having got through the necessary preparations for a lengthened tour, of which he had chosen Vienna for its object, Dudley very shortly set out with a weary heart on his course of self-enforced exile.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARY CRESSINGHAM'S CHARACTER.

Ah, me ! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear, by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

It had been Harry Percival's fortune, in early life, to save the life of Mary Cressingham. Walking one day near Kensington Gardens, his solitary reflections were broken in upon by the sound of a carriage which approached at a furious rate, and, turning round, he beheld a lady and a gentleman

seated in a curricie, with which the horses were running away with ungovernable fury. At a short distance, following it, were two grooms, who unthinkingly pursued the vehicle at full gallop, and, by urging the horses, hastened the very catastrophe which they wished to avert. Percival sprang forward, and, seizing the furious animals, succeeded in stopping them, just as they were making for the river, from which a very brief space separated them.

Mary Cressingham was the only daughter of Colonel Cressingham, a soldier of fortune, or, rather, of no fortune, for he inherited no patrimony : he had served many years in the army, and possessed only a small income, derived from his pay, and a trifling pension. Her mother, a sister of Sir Alexander Graham, had died while Mary was but an infant ; and Lady Margaret, the aunt of Mary, had contrived that she should be educated with her own daughter. The cou-

sins, therefore, grew up together till Mary had attained an age at which it was thought proper to recall her to preside over her father's household. A correspondence was, however, maintained between the cousins, which tended to keep alive their early feelings of affection. In some respects, a great similarity existed between them ; for both were young, both handsome, both accomplished. In conversation Mary was charming ; there was no effort, save that of accommodating herself upon all occasions to the capacity of those with whom she happened to converse. In order to induce others to entertain an imaginary confidence in their own superiority, she frequently affected utter ignorance upon subjects of which she was much better informed than those whom she lured into a belief of superiority. Listening with patience and apparent interest to remarks the most common-place and prosaic, she never allowed a sarcasm or a sneer to escape her lips or looks. She

was all ease and sprightliness of manner when she must have been worn out in spirit. One would have said that there was a certain degree of *espièglerie* visible in the tact with which the unsuspecting were drawn into the network prepared for their vanity. But if Mary did enjoy an inward pleasure in inveigling into her toils the unwary and the vain, she carefully concealed her triumph from the victims of her skill. She allowed them to indulge in all the pleasure of an innocent delusion, and rather fostered than disturbed the flattering slumber of sense into which she had lulled them. Of what consequence was it, then, that the self-complacent had been vanquished, if the chains which bound them were, to their eyes, enwreathed with laurels? The meshes in which they were entangled, the prison-bars within which they were enclosed, were, in their eyes, garlands of roses, and aureoles of fame. Who, then, could chide the am-

bition of that gentle conqueror, so skilful in war, so clement in victory? Miss Cressingham also assumed to speak with humility of the attainments of her sex, when she must have felt that, in intellectual power, she was vastly superior to nine-tenths of the men with whom she conversed. This arose, not from affectation, but from sincere simplicity of character. She shrank from making others sensible of her mental superiority; she loved to stoop her wing, and to live, for a time, in a less elevated region of the mind; to delight and gladden those who were unable to visit the heights to which her own intellect could raise her: there was about her an air of mysterious uncertainty, a mixture of reality and ideality which rendered it difficult to determine her precise character: there was much truth, but also much fancy; much that was sincere, much that was imaginative; there was always talent, and often brilliancy, but it was not easy on every occa-

sion to decide between that which was literal and that which was playful.

In entering the lists with an adversary so gifted, and occasionally so wayward, every one felt a degree of insecurity as to the nature of the warfare in which he was about to engage: it was not possible to know whether the lances were fashioned for pastime or conflict; whether it was to be a harmless joust, or one *à l'outrance*. We should have been apt to distrust our own opinions and impressions on this subject, were it not that we have heard others express a similar opinion.

“ Mary would be delightful,” say some, “ if we could but tell when she was in jest and when in earnest.” Those who felt disposed to quarrel with her on this score should have recollected, that what they imputed to the caprice of a gallant and wayward spirit, might find a home in the quiet recesses of their own dulness. If dull men will converse with

talented women, they must make up their minds to be generally victimised. If people will attempt Icarus flights, they will find out the weakness of the wing, and must endure an Icarus fate.

It was impossible to look on Mary's countenance without feeling, or rather fearing, that she was not so happy as she deserved to have been. At times she walked under a shadow. If, however, she had sorrows, she treasured them up in her own bosom; and you saw but faint traces of their shades pass over her features. She gave to others the happiness which was not always unalloyed in her own breast; and, whenever she felt a depression herself, she was more generous and profuse of kindness to others. To be a friend to her parent was a passport to her good regards.

Though agreeing in several points of resemblance, the cousins were still in many respects

essentially different. Constance was a blonde ; Mary, though far from a brunette, was perhaps equally far from the character of a blonde : Constance's form was slender and sylph-like ; Mary's, with equal grace, had more volume.

As compared with her cousin, one might observe that the temperature of Constance's mind was more easily constant. The range of the mental thermometer was not so great ; its variations were not so violent ; her mind was more even in its course, her feelings more under command, her temper more equable than that of Mary. Mary had all the fire of genius, with somewhat of its inconstancy ; its spirit mingled with the life-blood that flowed in her veins, and quickened and disturbed the pulsations of her heart. Constance, with scarcely less of talent, had less activity of mind ; was more tranquil, though she was not less energetic of purpose. Mary possessed

a quick and delicate perception, an exquisite sensibility, and a deep insight into all the lights and shadows of human life; she could at once appreciate the precise value to be attached to the pretensions of others. Her feelings were more acute than those of Constance. And yet, what was lost in composure of mind was perhaps gained in warmth of heart. Constance was less the creature of impulse than her cousin; in her whole conduct of life she was more influenced by judgment than fancy; her actions were the result of deliberation rather than the offspring of instant creation; she seemed ever under the sway of a strict moral discipline. There may have been inward struggle and commotion, but strife (if strife there were,) never reached the surface.

This digression upon the two cousins is already too long, but enough has been said to account for a young man of Harry Percival's

age falling desperately in love with so amiable a being as Mary Cressingham.

If gratitude and esteem are good foundations of affection, Mary's feelings will be neither improbable nor faulty. She loved—deeply, hopelessly loved. In the privacy of her chamber she in vain tried to school her heart to conquer this feeling; but still each day increased the admiration for him, and it required a constant effort on the part of the unhappy girl to conceal the love which had become rooted in her pure and fresh feelings. Despite of all her caution, her father had remarked that for some time there had evidently been a weight upon her spirits,—some hidden care seemed to prey upon her mind, — some deep-rooted grief had plunged her in a state of despondency. With the greatest kindness Colonel Cressingham spoke to his daughter upon the subject, entered fully into her feelings, and deplored the poverty that must place an inseparable bar

against her union with Percival; and, feeling that change of scene would be of material service in dispelling her gloom, finally arranged that they should leave England for the Continent.

CHAPTER IX.

MARRIAGE SETTLED. LORD ATHERLEY.

Marriage is a matter of more worth
Than to be dealt in by attorneyship ;
For what is wedlock forced but a hell,
An age of discord and continual strife ?

SHAKSPEARE—*Henry VI.*

THE intelligence of Dudley's departure for the Continent reached Graham Castle through the common vehicle of similar occurrences, the newspapers. As Lady Margaret thought she might now venture to indulge in the utmost effort of her malice towards Dudley, without any fear of danger, she did not fail to propa-

gate the scandalous reports that he had been detected in *an affair* with Jane Ashford, the gamekeeper's daughter ; that he had been the means of sending her affianced, Mark Luton, abroad, to avoid the obloquy that the exposure of so base a design would subject him to ; his affair, too, with Harry Percival at the gaming-house was greatly exaggerated, — as was his visit to the dying Jane.

These rumours, blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures, came to the ears of Constance. Day followed day, week followed week, months passed away, and no letters arrived to gladden her spirits. She sank, and deeply she felt the misery of that hope deferred, which is truly said to make the heart sick.

Lady Margaret had witnessed the childish attachment with Dudley ; but for some time had not the remotest idea that Constance had any influence over the mind of her youthful admirer. To make use of a commonplace ex-

pression, Lady Margaret had set her mind upon a match to which we have before alluded, and had done everything in her power to forward it. She had fully weighed the matter,—she had summoned up all her *pros* and *cons*. Lord Atherley was, first and foremost, a peer of the realm, and moreover was a man of high moral character, and was enormously rich;—Dudley Ravensworth was but a younger son, a detrimental, only fit to hold shawls and call carriages. In the event of his elder brother's death without issue, he would eventually be a baronet. But had the balance been even, selfishness and self-aggrandisement would have turned the scale.

Lady Margaret felt that she herself would receive much more consideration from, and have greater influence over, a man of Lord Atherley's easy temper and quiet character, than over one of Ravensworth's fashionable habits. When the thought once entered her

head, she was not slow to act upon it. Every effort was resorted to; the angry manner, the resigned, the sneering, the coaxing,—all were tried. As a last resort, she applied to Sir Alexander, who was immediately summoned to her presence.

“Do you, Sir Alexander, approve of a daughter’s flying in the face of her parents?”

“Certainly not, my dear,” was the natural reply of the timid Baronet.

“Well, then, Sir Alexander, circumstances have lately been, and are daily forced upon my attention, which, from my feelings as a wife and parent, I think it right to communicate to you. If no attachment has ripened at present between Constance and Mr. Ravensworth, there is every appearance of one existing and growing up.”

“Indeed, my dear?” replied the husband, in a most silvery tone.

“It is true, Mr. Ravensworth has left Eng-

land, but he may shortly return and we are bound to be cautious."

"Certainly, my dear."

"This idle fancy," continued Lady Margaret, "is really quite ridiculous. Constance is so fastidious, that it is impossible to please her."

"I never imagined she liked Mr. Ravensworth," said Sir Alexander, without raising his eyes from the table; "but as it seems I am mistaken, why——"

"Exactly, Sir Alexander," interrupted Lady Margaret. "You will of course see her upon the subject, and point out the imprudence of encouraging such an attachment; — that although it is not our wish that she should sacrifice her inclinations, it is a duty she owes to us and to herself to put an end to an affair that must be highly detrimental to her, and painful to our feelings. You understand, Sir Alexander?"

Sir Alexander did understand. Constance was summoned to the presence of her father, who sat *in banco*, with all the dignity of a full court of *one*. As she entered, he said,—

“My dear Constance, I have a matter of much importance to communicate to you, and it is one in which your interests are deeply involved.”

To this opening harangue Constance silently listened, without understanding its real purport.

“I have been thinking, my dear child, without wishing to control your affections, that Lord Atherley, who seeks to unite himself,” Sir Alexander stammered, “with an amiable, —virtuous,—and intelligent companion,—and —and friend.” Here Sir Alexander gained courage, as he laid before his trembling daughter the letter which Lord Atherley had addressed to Lady Margaret, and which Constance now hastily perused. “We think,” re-

newed the Baronet, "Lord Atherley is in every way calculated to enlarge the scene of *your*, indeed, I may add, of *our* happiness, by a befitting marriage."

Constance sighed, and but thought of Dudley. Her colour changed, as she replied, "You have a right, I presume, to decide, in all things, over my destiny."

Sir Alexander then proceeded. "Neither he nor Lady Margaret wished to compel; they had no desire to exercise parental authority; they only wished to guide her inexperienced inclinations and resolves."

Constance looked anxiously at her father. "You have always been an indulgent parent, I do not doubt; but—" here she faltered.

Sir Alexander continued. "Lord Atherley is in every respect calculated to make you an unobjectionable, nay, desirable husband. He proposes presenting himself here immediately."

“Immediately, father !” cried Constance. “You could not wish me to take such a step, without a just, a right deliberation.” She paused in deep emotion and thought. On the one hand were the bonds of filial duty, those bonds which feeling and religion require of the daughter to her parents ; on the other, was the consideration of her own happiness, and what was due to her own feelings. Constance was very pale, and her eyes were full of tears ; her father let them flow on for a moment, with a sort of judicial repose.

“Listen to me, Constance,” he said, after a pause, in a softened manner, and in a tone of the greatest kindness. “It pains me to see your distress. The first wish of Lady Margaret and myself is to see you happy ; great has been our joy at the thought that the son of your father’s oldest friend would become his support in his old age. Had Alfred lived —” Constance burst into tears. “But,”

continued Sir Alexander, "all our bright visions are destroyed. We must submit. You refuse Lord Atherley ;—you seal our misery for ever. I am too well aware of the cause of your refusal. I will not, however, harass your feelings by alluding to it."

Constance was deeply affected by her father's air of kindness ; she retired to the solitude of her chamber, and gave way to reflections far from consolatory. The recollections of the friend of her youth, and the happy days passed in his society traversed her mind. Then the thought of his inconstancy, of his worthlessness, astounded her reason, and weakened her powers of action. A parent's love, the thought of her whose watchful care had protected her in the helpless hours of infancy, who in childhood had mourned over her little griefs, had rejoiced in her innocent delights, had administered the healing balm in sickness, and had instilled into her mind the love of

truth, of virtue, and of wisdom ; when she traced the weary sleepless nights, the anxious watchings and incessant care, the love and tenderness of a parent's fondness, which knew no bounds ; she felt that cold and callous must be that heart that did not cherish every feeling of respect, gratitude, and veneration to her to whom she owed her existence, and all that protected and enlightened it. Yet she shuddered, as she thought of Lord Atherley ! Unaccustomed herself to deceive, she did not dream of suspecting others, particularly those she loved, of deceiving her. She believed all to be, like herself, actuated by noble impulses, scorning to attain the object of their most cherished wishes by base or sinister means. She walked about the room ; deliberated, determined ; wavered and deliberated again. Her mind was at war with itself. "Oh, that my mortal course were ended !" exclaimed Constance, in all the bitterness of her anguish ;

and then, after a short abandonment to intense grief, her better reason triumphed.

But it is useless to dwell upon her train of sad thoughts. The repeated attempts to move her to a determination, which was held out to her as an honourable sacrifice to duty, were not long unattended with an approach to success. Urged on every side, and worked upon by those she loved, her scruples gave way (though not without a severe struggle) before the arguments and expostulations of her parents, and she at last consented to bestow her hand, though her heart was far away. Thus the matrimonial scheme, so zealously advocated by Lady Margaret, had been successful. And had the mother no pang of remorse, no misgivings in crushing her offspring's young affections in their early bud ; in interfering in that upon which the whole happiness of a life depends ; in, perhaps, entailing regret and misery, from which there is no absolution but

death, and thus adding her to the victims sacrificed to what the world calls parental *prudence*? No ; she reasoned with the common sophistry. “That it was her duty to establish her child, that it was for her *real* welfare, that she would soon forget her first preference ; and that she was wholly and solely actuated by a due and motherly regard for her daughter’s interest.”

Constance was ill at ease during the usual preparations, so generally interesting to the sex. She had obeyed an impulse, but her conscience, that self-approving, or self-condemning judge, —whispered “I do not love him !” Happy would it have been, had she but possessed one friend to tell her, that endless sorrow and untold regrets would be her portion,—if, with a true attachment for one man, she approached the altar to proclaim her fealty to another. She had yielded to the wishes, the almost arbitrary mandates of her mistaken parents. Yet she

felt that she had been unfaithful to one whom she had discouraged rather than discarded—a pang of self-upbraiding wrung her, as the hour approached that placed a bar of eternal separation between Dudley and herself.

Lady Margaret's mansion in Grosvenor-square had now begun to assume that busy joyous aspect which precedes a fashionable marriage. Lawyers, milliners, jewellers, coachmakers, confectioners, trustees, &c. &c., crowded the house. The tables were covered with drafts of settlements, plans for new carriages, sketches of new settings for the union of the Graham and Atherley diamonds. Nothing that could dazzle her imagination, awaken her ambition, or gratify her vanity by the most splendid presents was left undone; and the affair proceeded, as is customary in the beau monde, rather by the agency of parents and friends than by any advances on the part of the bridegroom elect. The law's delay is proverbial, and there can be

no doubt, that the legal profession are all looked upon as an extremely tedious race by persons placed in Lord Atherley's situation. He devoted his days to law and Lincoln's Inn. Constance (dragged by her mother) lived but with *modistes* and *couturières*. At length the settlements were completed, the equipages finished, and the wedding paraphernalia sent home.

It was Constance's wedding day. All the connections of both families were invited, and carriages were rolling rapidly in the direction of St. James's church. Constance stood before the glass, arrayed in her bridal attire. Mary Cressingham, (who had returned to England for her cousin's wedding,) had placed the wreath of orange flowers upon her head, and arranged the rich point veil which was to hide the blushes and tremors of the bride. Constance remained like a statue, though strong emotions were gathering within her. Her eyes were fixed

upon her mother. Recollections of former years came over her. Her heart sank within her. Perhaps she should never again return to that house, as a dweller therein ; she looked round the room in which she had experienced all her young fresh feelings of sorrow and joy, —she felt as if she should be stifled.

“ It is time for us to move,” said her mother. Constance rose and walked to the window—she checked her rising tears. We will not stop to describe the *trousseau*—blonde,—bridesmaids,—corbeilles,—flowers,—wedding favors which are too often typical of the bridegroom’s smiles ; bright but transient,—worn in public for a few days, then thrown aside to be seen no more. All were *selon les règles*, and merited the panegyrics in which the Morning Post exceeded its usual eloquence. It may be best to say the hour arrived, never had a brighter morning shone. “ Happy is the bride the sun shines upon,” is an adage.

Adorned for the sacrifice, the envied victim proceeded to St. James's Church to be married with the pomp of a special license and a bishop. Lady Margaret was in the vestry with her daughter, attended by her bridesmaids and friends, leaning on Sir Alexander's arm. Constance was led up the aisle to the altar. *His* countenance was beaming with pride and exultation, he felt the tremor of her arm, but she looked composed—

“ A soil on her rich veil appears
Unsuiting here,—and it is tears.”

The awful words were spoken “in sickness and in health to love cherish and obey till death do us part.”

“ At each response the sacred rite requires
From her full bosom bursts the unbidden sigh ;
A strange mysterious awe the scene inspires,
And on her lips the trembling accents die.”

Constance had surrendered her happiness to

the earnest persuasions of her ambitious mother. The merry chimes announced that the ceremony was over. She had received her father's last embrace and parting blessing; friendly congratulations had passed; kind wishes were breathed; the breakfast went off as well as such fêtes usually do, where society is brought together from necessity, not choice; nothing was talked of but the beauty and grace of the young bride, and, Constance having changed her bridal dress for a more suitable travelling attire, the "happy pair" left in a travelling chariot and four for Compton Audley.

CHAPTER X.

VIENNA.

Oh ! for some fairy talisman to conjure
Up to those longing eyes the form they pine for !
And yet in love there's no such word as absence ;
The loved one, like our guardian spirit, walks
Beside us ever—shines upon the beam—
Perfumes the flower, and sighs in every breeze !
Its presence gave such beauty to the world
That all things beautiful its likeness are ;
And aught in sound most sweet, to sight most fair,
Breathes with its voice, or like its aspect smiles.

BULWER.

Strange sight this Congress ! destined to unite
All that's incongruous, all that's opposite.
I speak not of the Sovereigns—they're alike,
A common coin as ever mint could strike :
But those who sway the puppets, pull the strings,
Have more of motley than their heavy kings ;
Jews, authors, generals, charlatans combine,
While Europe wonders at the vast design.—BYRON.

DUDLEY was now progressing slowly towards the Austrian capital, for unlike the generality of British tourists on the Continent, who get over the most ground in the smallest time imaginable, Ravensworth, more for the sake of his companion than himself, stopped to see every place worthy of note. The excitement of travelling is only excitement to the idle and unoccupied; but to those whose thoughts are filled with one anxious and importunate subject, all that the traveller can recognise is but the changing objects of an enlarged and peopled panorama. Life, indeed, is in it; but it is life that has no sympathies in common with those of the gazer. The present was filled with the pangs of parting, for an unlimited time, with her he loved best. The effort of travelling, therefore, though it forced Dudley into active exertion, and interrupted the melancholy reflections, which, like clouds driven before the winds in a tempest, chased one

another in succession through his mind, produced, however, but a trifling lull of relief—one thought, one soul-absorbing thought, perpetually haunted his remembrance. At Brussels neither the gaiety nor interest there felt at the return of the family of the Prince of Orange, could in the least beguile him. In vain his companion tried to rouse him by fighting over again the battle of Bergen op Zoom—that fatal enterprise, wherein Skerret, the intrepid defender of Tariffa, led the attack and fell; where Gore, Mercer, Carleton, M'Donald fell; where three hundred were killed and eighteen hundred wounded; and which attack, though it promised at the onset complete success, — failed in the end, from the loss of the principal officers of the right column, which occasioned it to fall into disorder, and from the left column being weakened by the loss of a detachment of guards, cut off by the enemy. In vain his

present chronicler gave a fresh recital of the siege of Pampeluna, where he had figured in a *corps de réserve* stationed at some three and a half leagues distant.

Dudley listened indeed, and in some degree felt grateful for the good intentions of his friend, since he probably imagined that those hours which are occupied — however trifling may be the nature of the occupation — pass easier by, than those in which the mind is left unrelieved from the pressure of its own immediate recollections. Fortunately, however, his military spirit was not dead, and perhaps at no period of time was the profession of arms so honourable. The war, at first originating in the sanguinary strife of the revolutionary mob of Paris, carried on with almost uninterrupted succession for nearly a quarter of a century, had gradually involved the whole of Europe in its whirlpools. Napoleon had arisen in the midst of it, and kingdoms and principalities

had changed masters through his instrumentality. But the tide of success had been felt to turn at Moscow ; and now the prostrate nations, no longer separated by his policy or broken by his power, were arising and revenging their many wrongs, and the terrible battle of Leipsic had been followed by the dethronement of the revolutionary Emperor, and the Congress of crowned heads was now assembled at Vienna.

Vienna is that concentrating point where Greeks, Turks, Jews, and Italians meet, for the arrangement of their mercantile affairs throughout the Continent of Europe. There you are constantly struck with the number and varieties of characters which you daily meet. The Greek and Albanian, with their short cloak edged with sable and ermine, delicately-trimmed mustachio, and exposed throat. Long robes trimmed with tarnished gold or silver, with thickly-folded girdles and turbans, and

beards of unrestrained growth, point out the majestic Turk. The olive-tinted visage, with a full, keen, dark eye, and a costume half Greek and half Turkish, distinguish the citizen of Venice or Verona..

Ravensworth soon found himself a welcome guest in the imperial circle, and in the brilliant coteries of the Esterhazys and Schwartzenegrs. The days were passed in morning drives to the Prater and Aungarten, in the promenade of the Rempart and Belvedere Gardens; in evening assemblies, select dinners, splendid balls, *petits soupers*, theatrical representations.

The gay and busy appearance of Vienna, peopled with sovereigns, ambassadors, ministers, and generals; its bustling activity; the streets crowded with people, groups of military parading the city; the balconies filled with fair spectators; beating of drums, firing of cannons, ringing of bells;—all were vivid and brilliant. Much interesting matter was acces-

sible to a lover of the fine arts; the gallery of the Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen, the imperial collection of paintings at the Belvédère, the private cabinets of Prince Esterhazy, Liechtenstein, Schönborn, and Count Lamberg.

Dudley visited the two arsenals, the city and the imperial one; in the former is preserved the head of Kara Mustapha, who conducted the siege of 1683, and was strangled the year after at Belgrade by the Sultan's order; and in the latter are to be seen memorials of many great men, the armour of the celebrated crusader, Godfrey of Bouillon, the servant of the Holy Temple; of Frederic Barbarossa, and the Emperor Charles the Fifth; the leathern jacket and the hat worn by the great Gustavus Adolphus when he was killed at the battle of Lützen; the helmet of Prince Eugene of Savoy, the brother warrior of Marlborough; the balloon used by the French at the battle of

Fleurus in 1793 ;—all were here ! Dudley forgot the present in the past. His mind presented to his imagination the enthusiastic multitude, governed by a pious though mistaken zeal, devoting their lives and their fortunes to the recovery of the sacred city from the hands of the Paynim. He heard the voice of the venerable hermit, Walter the Moneyless. The Counts Toulouse, Fernandoise, and Blois, the careless and gallant Robert of Normandy, were before him. He saw in his mind's eye the siege of Nice ; the re-capture and re-taking of Jerusalem ; the crusade of the Emperor Conrade and Lewis the Seventh. He shuddered at the assassination of the brave Marquis of Montserrat ; despised the weak Austria and the envious Philip ; and his heart swelled at the noble daring and gallant exploits of Cœur de Lion and the Soldan Saladin. And yet amidst the gaities which courtesy sometimes compelled him to be a party to, he was dull

and abstracted: his thoughts were far away. The once deep-rooted passion, strong and intense as life itself, left not one fond fancy free for any other than her, his first, young, early, only love ! His imagination reverted to Constance, and he fervently prayed that she would follow his example of devotion, and hold in indifference all the homage offered to her. It was ever a happiness to him to fly from the coldly-brilliant, heartless society into which he was thrown, to dwell rapturously on “England and the English” and in his mental vision to follow *her* through scenes where her steps had paced with his own. Hope whispered that his probation would soon be happily ended, and he looked forward with sanguine delight to the moment which would restore him to his beloved Constance.

Anxious, however, to witness some of the sights of the renowned Congress, it was with no small degree of interest and en-

thusiasm that he attended the fête given in honour of the victory of Leipsic, which took place on the second morning of his arrival in the Austrian capital. On this occasion twenty thousand men were assembled in the Prater. At eleven o'clock in the forenoon the Emperors, the Kings and Allied Sovereigns, the Empress and Queens, came upon the ground with a very numerous and brilliant suite. The troops having formed an immense square, the *Te Deum* was chanted by innumerable warrior voices; after which the troops defiled in presence of their majesties; the Archduke Constantine being at the head of his regiment of Cuirassiers. Dinner was then served up to the Sovereigns, the officers, and the troops. The Sovereigns dined in the villa at one end of the Prater, and the troops on the field. Nothing could exceed the grand gaiety of the city. Multitudes collected to see the Sovereigns, and were coming and

going every moment ; the drums were beating ; the men under arms ; the people were *en masse* on foot, on horseback, and in carriages, jostling each other in every direction ; four royal guards of grenadiers were mounted on the Grand Square. The *wache heraus* — “Guard turn out,” — was uttered every five minutes.

Amongst other entertainments which had been provided for the amusement of royalty, nothing could surpass the splendour of a tournament which took place at the Imperial riding-school. The sides were filled with a dense mass of well-dressed spectators. At each end, galleries had been erected, decorated with party-coloured festoons and draperies of silk ; the pillars that supported them, were covered with floating pennons, bearing gallant mottoes ; and these galleries were now filled with all the distinguished representatives of the most noble families. One was reserved for the reception of the court ;

the train who attended the imperial *cortège* on this occasion, were of the bravest and the fairest, the wisest counsellors, the highest born nobles.

The arrival of the Empress, who was to appropriate the rewards, escorted by the noble Hungarian guard in their uniforms of green and silver, with their leopard skin accoutrements, all mounted on grey chargers, was announced by a clamorous blast of war-like music, playing the national anthem, "God preserve the Emperor." Several thousands of male voices joining in the choral chaunt; the scene was singularly imposing. A flourish of trumpets announced the arrival of those who meant to take part in the tournament. The massive gates were then thrown open, and the knights, preceded by heralds and pursuivants at arms, entered in long procession, forming up in line of double file in front of the imperial tent, the leader of each party

being in the centre of the foremost rank, their swords drawn, and their lances upright, their bright points glancing

“ Their armour as it caught the rays,
Flash’d back again the general blaze
In lines of dazzling light.”

There they remained until the “ crowned heads ” had inspected the ranks.

To describe all the “ bravely mounted ” and the “ richly armed ” would be impossible. There was one party, however, that we must more particularly notice, headed by one who looked the “ flower of chivalry,” and who was mounted on a red roan charger, armed in a complete suit of Milan steel ; his helmet was of burnished gold, and he was attended by a gallant squire, carrying his tilting spear.

“ He burn’d the gilded spurs to claim.”

Four men at arms on coal black steeds, heavily sheathed in mail and plate, bore his crest, a

lion *passant*, upon their shields. The joustings then began.

Every knight who wished to enter the lists approached the barrier, throwing his gauntlet of defiance over it. The herald's attendant then came forth, and registered his name or armorial bearings. Many were the "gages" showered in the lists. The contendors were then admitted at separate barriers; after paying their respects to the sovereigns and ladies, they took their respective stations, when, as the trumpets sounded, couching their lances and spurring their horses, "the faint image of war" commenced.

For some moments the dust raised by the clattering steeds darkened the air: when the tourney became visible, many knights had been shaken from their saddles; armour was shattered, and lances splintered. A truce was then sounded, the successful champions filing by and saluting the imperial party. At the head

rode the Knight of the Lion, followed by his brave companions in arms.

The lists being removed, other war-like feats commenced ; here again the perfect horsemanship of the lion-hearted knight, and the activity of his gallant roan, proved victorious. The air was now rent with the clamorous shouts of exultation. Ladies waved their embroidered scarfs ; military music was sounded, and banners and pennons floated in the wind. The knights then dismounted, removing their helmets, and, kneeling at the foot of the throne, the prizes were awarded.

Dudley, for he was the distinguished Knight of the Lion, came forward. Every eye was fixed upon him, and he on one knee made obeisance : there was a murmur of admiration at the noble appearance of this handsome and gallant youth, whose magnificent suit of armour, became his firm and graceful form : for an instant delight at his triumph, and the natural pride of

youth animated his countenance; but his joy was momentary, and it soon retired from the open light of his features to the shade of his saddened breast.

The imperial palace was crowded with crowned heads. There were two emperors, two empresses, four kings and a queen; two hereditary princes, the one imperial the other royal; two grand duchesses, and two princes. The whole of the building, we may here observe, forms a rectangled parallelogram; on one of the great sides is the palace, properly so called, and on the other, opposite to it, are the buildings for the council of state. The Amelia and Swiss palaces form the wings. The Emperor and Empress of Russia inhabited the second story of the Amelia palace. The King of Wurtemberg occupied the first. The King and Queen of Bavaria, with the princes, their sons, and the grand Duchess of Weimar, occupied the council buildings. The King of Den-

mark had that part of the Swiss palace which looks towards the bastions; and the King of Prussia, that which faces the city. The hereditary Prince of Prussia resided with the latter. The Emperor and Empress of Austria; the grand Duchess of Oldenburgh and the hereditary Prince of Austria occupied what is properly called the palace. The young Archdukes and Archduchesses were at Schönbrun.

The witty, and not less true saying, that “*Le Congrès danse, mais il n’avance pas*,” was strikingly illustrated. At a party given by Prince Metternich, the gay and courtly throng imparted life and animation to the scene. All the nobles, by the express wish of the Emperor, appeared in the costumes of their respective peasants.

The ball given by Prince Razumousky, the Russian Ambassador, was followed by a magnificent banquet, at which eight hundred guests were all conveniently seated at the tables.

The most splendid entertainment was the court-ball. It was one of unequalled brilliancy; there were foreigners of every European nation. The splendid Russian, the proud Austrian; natives of Prussia and Poland; Englishmen, Frenchmen, Danes, Swedes, Portuguese, Italians, Greeks, and Spaniards. The whole suite of long and handsome apartments were thrown open. The antechambers and corridors were lined with the noble Hungarian guard, in their richest uniforms. The saloon, in which the Empress and her ladies were seated, was a dazzling scene of magnificence; there were feathers waving, diamonds glittering, lustres gleaming, music quavering, fal-lips prattling. The roof supported by pillars in imitation of finely white polished Parian marble, reflected the lustres by which it was lighted; the ladies richly adorned with diamonds;—kings, nobles, and ambassadors decorated with orders, dressed in military uni-

forms, interwoven with gold, clasped with pearls;—diamonds, plumes, stars, and orders, were all in profusion. There might be seen the grave courtier, and the stern patriot; the youthful scions of the noblesse, just launched in the ensnaring blandishments and gaities of the world;—the youthful *belle*, the faded beauty, the aged chaperon, emperors and empresses, kings and queens, warriors, statesmen, mingled with a galaxy of beauty. Mazurkas, polonaises, waltzing were seen to perfection; the music was unequalled. *There*, amidst *la crème*, might be seen the shrunken figure and sallow features of the Emperor of Austria; the manly form of the great Autocrat of Russia; the solemn gait of the King of Prussia, whose tall form contrasted with that of Denmark's diminutive King; the English-looking face of the King of Bavaria, the fine forms of the Duke of Saxe Coburg and his brother the Prince Leopold; the handsome

dark military figure of the Viceroy of Italy, Eugène Beauharnois; and last not least the simple manly form of Wellington. But it would be an endless task to enumerate the lions of the night. It was a vast regal menagerie, and even *one* of them, had he but made his appearance during a London season, would have been run after with that avidity with which John Bull always welcomes novelty, whether in the shape of a Don Cossack, a Hottentot Venus, an *anatomie vivante*, a Bayadère, a Swiss Giantess, or a Polish Dwarf.

The frost had now set in; the ground was covered with snow; all the wheeled carriages, even to the hackney coaches, had disappeared, and the streets were crowded with sledges. The Emperor had appointed a day for a party, at one of his palaces, some distance from the city. At two o'clock the procession, consisting of forty sledges, left the palace, preceded and followed by a band of music and an escort of cavalry.

Nothing could be more animated than the appearances of the *traineaux*, their brilliant colours, their ornaments of gold and silver, lined throughout with the richest velvets and most expensive furs. The horses were caparisoned in embroidered cloth of gold, with plumes upon their heads and necks; their manes and tails plaited with ribands; and bearing a mass of silver or gilded bells across their shoulders. The picturesque costumes of the servants in their cloaks of sable, of the chasseurs and equerries in the uniforms and liveries of their respective masters, were strikingly effective. The return of the procession, by torch-light, had a most imposing effect.

A dulness was spread over Vienna by the death of the Prince of Aremberg. A very spirited horse which he was riding in St. Joseph's Platy, knocked down a woman. The Prince alighted to inquire into the situation of the woman, who had fortunately received no se-

rious injury. The young Prince again mounted his horse, which shortly reared and threw his rider ; he was conveyed, in a lifeless state, to the palace of Prince Schwartzemberg. A fatality seems to have attended the Prince's family. His father received, when shooting, a gun-shot in his eye, by which he was deprived of his sight ; his mother died on the guillotine ; his brother was banished in consequence of a duel in which he had the misfortune to kill his adversary ; and, finally, his sister perished in the fire which broke out in the house of Prince Schwartzemberg, at Paris. This, indeed, was a doomed house !

But the object of the greatest interest to Dudley, and one for whom he felt the deepest commiseration, was that inestimable mourner, the dethroned Empress of the world, the imperial daughter, the imperial bride, the imperial victim, sacrificed to pride ; whose lot it was, midst the festivities, the rejoicings, with

which her father's court re-echoed, to maintain the dignity of misfortune. "Proud Austria's mournful flower," the Empress Marie Louise, with her guiltless son, to whom, but a few months before, the eyes of the world had been directed,—now lived in seclusion at Schönbrun, a phantom of departed glory and greatness. Ravensworth, tempted by the interest of the object, so far transgressed the limits of propriety as to request an introduction to the infant King of Rome, then styled the Prince of Parma,

" the boy,
The young Astyanax of modern Troy."

His request was acceded to. He was conducted to the garden, where, dressed in the uniform of an hussar, with a profusion of light curly hair falling upon his neck, and with an engaging though bashful appearance, the son of *L'homme du siècle* was occupied in the

childish pursuit of some new invented game. Some dozen Frenchmen, still wearing the liveries of the fallen Emperor, and a few faithful friends, were all that remained of the court of the Empress.

Dudley reflected on the rapid and eventful changes that a few short years had worked in her destiny. Nine years had only elapsed since the French army had entered Vienna in triumph, headed by him who had overrun Europe from the Tagus to the Kremlin—nay, within five, the city had again been taken possession of by Napoleon's all-conquering arms. It was here, too, that the prediction was realised, that his life would be exposed to the chances to which despots are ever liable by the dagger of some political or religious enthusiast. In the very palace of Schönbrun he had established his head-quarters, and dictated the terms of peace to the imperial house of Austria. He *reflected* on the bitter pang the daughter of

that house must feel at the *fêtes* given in honour of the downfall of the father of her son, of him from whom her own unexampled greatness had sprung; he *reflected* on the abject misery, the bitter hopelessness, the now-deserted Marie Louise—

“ The theme of pity, and the wreck of power,” —

must have experienced, when in a gallery in the same palace, where five years previously, on a sick bed, she had obtained the sympathy of Napoleon in diverting the bombardment from the quarter in which she resided, and where four years ago she had witnessed the august ceremony of her espousals, she had now concealed herself to behold the allied sovereigns, those sovereigns who had deposed her husband, and called down public vengeance upon his head. Here subsequently the four allied sovereigns of Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, concluded a treaty binding themselves to main-

tain the treaty of Paris, to keep each, one hundred and fifty thousand men in the field, and not to lay down their arms till Bonaparte should be deprived of the power of exciting disturbances, thus placing him without the pale of civil and social relations, as an enemy and destroyer of the tranquillity of the world.

The circumstances that led to this treaty are well known. The news reached Vienna that on the 24th of February Bonaparte had sailed from Porto Ferrajo in one of his own brigs, the *Inconstant*, followed by six smaller vessels. A few Frenchmen, several Corsicans, Elbese, and Poles, to the amount of one thousand, accompanied him. It was stated, that after encountering two great risks, first in meeting a royal French frigate, which hailed the *Inconstant*, and secondly in the pursuit of the British sloop of war, the *Partridge*, which had followed with the determination to capture or sink the flotilla, he had landed at Cannes, in the gulph of

St. Juan in Provence, between Frejus and Antibes, and on the next day had proceeded on his route, escorted only by a few Polish lancers. He had passed the town of Grasse, without entering it, and in the two following days had proceeded by Sisteron and Gap across the mountains to Grenoble, where the 7th regiment, with their colonel, Labedoyère, had joined his ranks, and on the 8th of March the whole garrison had opened the gates to him. He then advanced with his eagle to Lyons, which he entered at the head of six hundred horse, when he was joined by the troops in garrison; thence to Maçon and Chalons; at Laons de Saulnier, "the bravest of the brave," Ney, who had declared that he would bring Bonaparte to Paris, like a wild beast in a cage, recognized his superiority, joined him, and again sunk into his satellite. In a few days his advanced guard was at Auxerre, forty leagues from Paris; and before the end of the month he had reached

Fontainebleau, near which, at Melun, one hundred thousand men were posted.

But, to our history. It was on the morning of the 7th of March, that a numerous party of sportsmen assembled near Eisenstadt, the magnificent residence of Prince Esterhazy, to enjoy a diversion altogether novel in Hungary, a stag-hunt *à l'Anglaise*; the pack English, (Lord Stewart's, now the Marquis of Londonderry's fox hounds;) the horses English, huntsmen and whippers-in English, all in English costume. What a contrast is this neat turn-out to the show, tinsel, and trapping, the pomp and circumstance of a foreign *chasse* that had previously taken place. The mighty Nimrod, the Picqueur, was richly caparisoned in a gold-laced cocked hat, a powdered peruke, long yellow coat with crimson facings and gilt buttons, bearing on them impressions of all the different animals of the chase. His accoutrements of the field were huge jack-

boots, long chain-spurs, French-horn, and *couteau de chasse*. His thick stumpy horse was fat as a prize ox, with red velvet housings, holsters at his saddle bow, gold embossed bridle and crupper. The *valets des chiens* were in laced cocked-hats, scarlet jackets and "shorts," white stockings and pumps; a few cumbering *gens d'armes* hung at your elbow, ordering you to the right or left.

But, to return to our chase. At eleven o'clock a noble stag was turned out, and went away in gallant style. When viewed at the distance of about two miles, the hounds were laid on, and after a little time challenged in good form. The crash was awful—

"A cry more tuneable
Never, was hallooed to, or cheered with horn."

Forward, forward! resounds through the plain. Away they went at an English pace, over a fine galloping country, through the extensive plain of Margarethen, towards the lake

of Sulty; here the stag took the water, the hounds followed! Their noble master, Prince Esterhazy, and a few chosen sportsmen dashing in with them. The scene was now most animating,—a stag swimming a lake, more than a mile from one shore to the other, a gallant pack following, encouraged by the daring riders; happily they all came safely to shore, and, after a few moments' pause, the hounds challenged, and ran in a direct line for nearly two miles; here the deer was headed, and bent his course back towards the lake, which he made a desperate effort to gain, but in vain, for before he could reach the water's edge, the gallant pack had pulled down their game. Here the chosen few were joined by their long-lost companions, who were not amphibious enough to prefer swimming a lake to galloping on dry land. In one respect they had been compensated for their loss of sport; they were the first to hear of the escape of one, who for years had "kept the

world at bay ;” His country’s Cæsar, Europe’s Hannibal—

“ Whose game was empires, and whose stakes were thrones,
Whose table earth,— whose dice were human bones.”

A courier had that morning reached the Duke of Wellington with despatches from Lord Burgersh, giving an account that Bonaparte had quitted the island of Elba.

Dudley immediately left Vienna, proceeded to Dover, where he found the regiment to which he had been just appointed lieutenant, preparing to embark for Ostend.

CHAPTER XI.

WATERLOO.

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe,
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

BYRON.

Yes—Agincourt may be forgot,
And Cressy be an unknown spot,
And Blenheim's name be new;
But still in story and in song,
For many an age remembered long,
Shall live the towers of Hougoumont
And field of Waterloo.

WALTER SCOTT.

THE embarkation commenced as soon as the transports were ready, and the first fair wind wafted them from their native shore; few can witness their father-land fade away from their view without experiencing those painful and melancholy feelings which the remembrance of home and former years so painfully excites.

“ The sails were fill’d, and fair the light winds blew,
As glad to waft him from his native home;
And fast the white rocks faded from his view,
And soon were lost in circumambient foam :
And then, it may be, of his wish to roam,
Repented he, but in his bosom slept
The silent thought, nor from his lips did come
One word of wail, whilst others sat and wept
And to the reckless gales unmanly moaning kept.”

Dudley’s departure was embittered by the reflection that he had not had time to revisit the scene of his youth and love, to purify in Constance’s thoughts his character, and to restore himself to her affections. His military enthusiasm was now awakened; dreams of ambition illumined his slumbers, hopes of dis-

tion and honour brightened his waking thoughts. We pass over the life of Dudley in Brussels; it was one of excitement and anxiety.

On the morning of the 16th June, the division to which Ravensworth belonged was drawn up at the Park at Brussels. Nothing could exceed the martial bearing of the men, the fluttering of the tartans, the bagpipes playing the Highland pibroch. They marched from the Place Royale, through the forest of Soignies, and at half-past two reached Quatre-Bras. We pass over the event of that and the following day. On the night of the 17th they took up their ground on the field of Waterloo.

“ Our bugles sang truce, for the night-cloud had lowered
And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky;
And thousands had sunk on the ground overpowered,
The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die.”

But sleep was denied to Dudley, who, cold, comfortless, and disheartened, was rendered fur-

ther wretched at the loss of Harry Percival, killed at Quatre-Bras.

Dudley was now exposed in an open bivouac to the inclemencies of the weather, to the heavy bursts of rain, the vivid flashes of lightning, the loud claps of thunder, the furious gusts of wind. Heavily and slowly did the night wear through. The dawn of the 18th was attended with the same tempestuous weather ; at daylight, wet and unrefreshed, the troops arose from their cheerless bivouac, to make preparations for the coming fight. The armies were visible to each other.

The battle of Waterloo has been so often and so ably described, that it is needless to enter into it, further than to say, Dudley bore his share of the glory of that well-contested day ; posted with his regiment on the left, near Ter la Haye, he saw

“ In seas of gore expire
Redoubted Picton’s soul of fire.”

Yes,—he saw the death of him who led on the victorious assault of Ciudad Rodrigo ; whose daring hand planted the British standard upon the castle of Badajos ; whose battalions filled the centre of that formidable line at Vittoria, before which the veteran troops of France fled in terror and dismay.

Dudley's regiment maintained a conspicuous post in that embattled line, where the British guards repulsed and put to flight the guards of France, the veteran followers of the imperial warrior.

Just previous to that last attack, which decided the fate of the day, whilst gloriously leading his company to a charge with bayonets, Dudley received a wound from a musket-ball, through the shoulder ; he fell, and in this helpless state lay a considerable time on the ground, every moment in danger of being trampled upon by the enemy's straggling cavalry, and suffering great agony, accompa-

nied by the most violent thirst. A French officer severely wounded crept towards him, and when, to all appearance at the last gasp, presented a flask of spirit to him. This revived Dudley, but almost produced a fatal result, for, at that moment, a lancer plunged his lance into his arm, exclaiming, "*Ah! le coquin n'est pas mort:*" recovering his lance, he was about to renew his attack, when a private soldier of Dudley's company, who had been disabled by a wound in his knee, threw himself before him and averted the blow. He fell a victim to his fatal intrepidity, and this is not the only instance of the devoted bearing of the British soldier in sacrificing his life to avert death from his officer.

The minutes dragged heavily away, as Dudley lay stretched on the ground, surrounded by the dead and dying. It is strange with what power the thought of "home" comes upon us when we are suffering mental or bodily

pains ; Dudley felt this acutely, he thought of Constance ; never was her image absent from his thoughts.

The firing now seemed to spread itself over the whole surface of the plain. Napoleon rallied his forces, made a desperate effort with the cavalry and infantry, supported by the fire of artillery, to force the left centre ; his best and bravest troops fell by sections around him : the result is well known ; he was utterly defeated, his troops retired in great confusion, and “ *Le Vainqueur du Vainqueur de la terre* ” lost the name for ever.

For many hours Dudley lay thus extended, exhausted with the loss of blood, when a party of his regiment came up. He was placed, writhing with agony, in a hospital waggon, and sent to the rear. Morning dawned upon the wretched sufferer ; he found himself in the hospital at Brussels. All around was calm, except when the stillness was broken by the

exclamation of despair, or the death shriek of some poor wretch in mortal agony. There, amidst the deep groans of the sufferers, and fearless of

“ All maladies,
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torturing qualms,
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,”

were to be seen Englishwomen, aye, even of “coroneted brows,” tending the wounded, alleviating their distresses, administering to their comforts, instilling the healing balm of religion into the dying.

The scene at Brussels surpassed all that imagination could conjure up. Upwards of 40,000 wounded, French, Belgians, Prussians, and English were brought into the town. The wounded were laid indiscriminately on straw throughout the city. Destitute of surgical assistance, the Belgian ladies and females were employed in their humane and indefatigable

exertions, bandaging their wounds, serving out nourishment, soothing and alleviating the pangs of the dying sufferers. Beautiful as woman is in all the charities of life, never does she appear so pre-eminently beautiful as in the chamber of death, administering to the wants of the sufferers. And who were these

“Ministering angels? when pain and anguish wring the brow.”

I would fain ennoble my pages with their names, but that I know they were those who

“did good by stealth,
And would blush to find it fame.”

There was one, however, that it is incumbent upon me to mention—Mary Cressingham, who with her father had, from motives of economy, retired to Brussels a month previous to the battle. Unobserved by the world, she stole into the hospital to pour the waters of consolation into the dejected heart. She felt

acutely the death of Harry Percival, though her heart acknowledged with silent pride that he died the death of the brave, the patriotic, and the good.

The injury that Dudley had received was less severe than he had at first imagined; his wounds gradually healed, and he was at length pronounced to be in a state in which he might without danger join the army. After traversing the road, replete with marks of recent ravages and hostile devastation, Dudley reached Paris, in time to see the standard of England and her allies floating triumphantly over the gates of that proud city.

Ravensworth encountered an adventure, which, if properly embellished, might make a tolerably effective incident for a modern farce. He had received a staff appointment, and it fell to his lot to be the bearer of despatches to the king of Holland at the Hague, containing the treaty of Paris. "He was a

goodly stripling then," and at the time of which we write, the costume of staff officers was not very strictly attended to—not quite "according to Dundas." In a fancy hussar dress, with a pair of mustachios highly curled and unguented, and in a light britshka and four, which the badness of the road had made necessary, Ravensworth left Paris. No adventure occurred on the road, except the usual vexatious delays at the fortified towns, the bribery of douanniers, the grumbling of postilions, the importunities of beggars, and all the usual *agrémens* of continental travelling until he reached the gates of the Hague. The day had been raw, cold, and wet; the mists had risen from the comfortless fields and dykes; and at a little before ten o'clock, Ravensworth, muffled up in his military cloak, stopped at the outer barrier or guard-house. "The bearer of despatches for His Majesty the King of Holland," said Dudley in tolerable good French. The

officer saluted, the sentry carried arms. An orderly entered the guard-room hastily ; and in a moment a staff officer, one of his Majesty's aides-de-camp, was on horseback by the side of the carriage.

“ Mon Général (General ! brevet rank, with a vengeance, thought Ravensworth) Sa Majesté le Roi mon maître, m'ordonne de vous informer qu'à votre arrivée en ville il vous recevra à quelle heure que ce soit.” Ravensworth bowed. “ Postillon, a l'hôtel de l'Europe. Tout est déjà préparé pour vous recevoir, Général.”

Ravensworth had no time for explanation or thanks, but was rapidly whirled towards the excellent hotel provided for him. At the entrance two sentries were posted ; they received him with military honours. The smiling landlord, with his happy-looking comely face, his better half in the neatest-looking of all gowns and caps, — were at

the door, attended by a regiment of officious, breathless waiters, simpering chambermaids, obsequious *cuisiniers* and *concierges* to greet him on his arrival

Ravensworth descended from the carriage amidst the cheers of a party assembled in the street. In the entrance hall an assemblage of ladies waved their handkerchiefs, presented bouquets to the astonished aide-de-camp, crying "Vive le Roi! Vive le Prince d'Orange! Orange Boven!" Ravensworth, knowing the admiration the Dutch felt for the gallant conduct of their Prince at Waterloo, attributed this *furore* to the presence of a brother in arms; and "bearing his blushing honours thick upon him," modestly acknowledged the flattering compliments, and entered the room appointed for him.—The landlord appeared, and, after making sundry obeisances, expressed a hope that every thing was to the General's satisfaction;

then obsequiously adding, “ Si monsieur le Général voulait seulement se montrer au peuple, cette condescendance de sa part serait reçu avec la plus vive reconnaissance par son humble et obéissant serviteur.” When Ravensworth appeared at the window, shouts and exclamations rent the air, and nothing could exceed the enthusiasm of the people.

Le Colonel Von R—— was now announced, and he informed Ravensworth that his royal master was ready to receive him. Ravensworth requested a quarter of an hour to make his toilet, which was immediately granted. Just as he had finished his refreshing task, a gentle knocking was heard at the door. “ Entrez.” — The landlord made his appearance, with a passport in his hand, which, on presenting to Ravensworth, he immediately recognised as his own, and which he had left at the gate when he had been received with so much honour.

“ Mille pardons, Général, est-ce la votre passeport ? ”

“ Assurément.”

The landlord left the room. Dudley imagined he saw some slight alteration in his manner. On re-entering his former sitting-room, the waiter, after indulging in a very suspicious-looking stare, begged his pardon, and requested he would follow him to another apartment, as that one was engaged.

Ravensworth's surprise and confusion increased ; he evidently saw an ebbing of the previous high tide of respect. Left to himself, he paced the room—the sound of relieving the sentries attracted his attention ; he threw open the window, and saw them marched off without a fresh deposit. He also fancied he heard some expressions which sounded to his ears, as rather coming from the north side of favour.

At length, after some little delay, the mystery

was dissolved by the arrival of the royal aide-de-camp, who most good-humouredly explained that His Majesty had for some days been anxiously expecting the arrival of a distinguished Russian officer from the city of the Czar, with the contract of marriage between the sister of the Emperor and the Prince of Orange; that the greatest anxiety had been manifested throughout the country at so important and long-wished for an event, as the union of the heir to the throne of Holland with a sister of the house of Russia. He explained that the mistake had occurred by the over zeal of the captain of the guard and himself, in not having ascertained the nature of the despatches or the name of their bearer. The passport had first thrown a light upon the subject. It now only remained for him to assure Le Capitaine Ravensworth that His Majesty would receive him on the following morning at 11 o'clock, and that he felt assur-

ed, as an English officer of distinction, he would receive every mark of courtesy and attention from those who had so lately fought, side by side, on the ensanguined field of Waterloo.

Dudley made a suitable speech in reply, and retired to his room, where fatigue and excitement soon gave him sleep.

On the following day he presented himself at the palace, and was most graciously received. The king regretted the inconvenience Ravensworth had been put to, though, to use his flattering phraseology, "He could not be very much surprised at the mistake that had occurred, for that Captain Ravensworth's conduct at Waterloo had been worthy of a General Officer's."

After joining the royal party at dinner, Ravensworth took his departure from the Hague, and returned to Paris, where his wound broke out afresh, and being advised to try a

sea voyage, he hastened to England, and finding a friend who was about to proceed to Quebec, he obtained a berth aboard, and went out in shattered health, and no less shattered spirits “o’er the dark blue waters of the Atlantic.”

CHAPTER XII.

AMERICA.

A wet sheet and a flowing sea
A wind that follows fast
And fills the white and rustling sail,
And bends the gallant mast ;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys !
While, like the Eagle free—
Away the good ship flies and leaves
Old England on the lee !

O for a soft and gentle wind !
I heard a fair one cry ;
But give to me the snoring breeze—
And white waves heaving high ;
And white waves heaving high, my boys !
The good ship light and free—
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we !

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

————— How divine,
The liberty, for frail, for mortal man
To roam at large among unpeopled glens,
And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps! WORDSWORTH.

THERE is nothing like active employment for diverting sorrow from its prey. The hurry of embarkation roused Dudley; his mind, which had dwelt with horror on the idea of so long a separation, was now relieved in some degree by the consolatory thought that Constance would retain the divine character of her name “through good report and evil report.” “If she loves me, absence and time are friends not foes.” With what rapture did he cherish the now withered flower which Constance had given him at their last interview, and with this simple gift what a chain of associations was linked! He had received much consolation from his accidental meeting with Miss Cressingham at Brussels, and through her he had addressed a line to Constance, dwelling at

greater length than might be palatable to our readers, upon “ *Amore e Costanza*.”

Early in June they sailed from Portsmouth, and at the end of about five weeks they discerned Cape Race, the south-easternmost point of the islands of Newfoundland. On the third day following they made Cape Ray, the south-westernmost point of the same island, and steered for the Bay of St. Lawrence. Here they had, according to the log, “ a succession of light airs ” for some days, with barely sufficient wind for the vessel to feel her helm ; all listlessly and lazily lounging, and whistling in vain for a wind. At length a breeze sprang up with such force, that the “ *Daring* ” could not set a stitch of canvass save her storm staysail, and fore topsail closely reefed. Thus she was running rapidly at twelve knots an hour.

Captain Oakleigh was, to use homely phrase, as fine a fellow as ever broke biscuit, and most rigid in the discharge of his duty ; he

possessed a sound and noble heart, a high independent spirit, a firm and manly character, and, notwithstanding the strictness of his discipline, was most universally popular; he had commanded a crack ship in the war, which was a pattern for order and regularity, and to that rigid discipline the steadiness of the British sailor is owing. Oakleigh was beloved by his crew: they saw in him the skilful seaman, the daring and intrepid leader; they felt an enthusiastic devotion for their captain; they boasted that, through the world, there was no such handsome craft as the *Daring*.

They sailed up the spacious and majestic St. Lawrence, the shores of which are studded with farm-houses, which, contrasted with the cultivated lands, and the surrounding scenery of islands, and mountains covered with immense forests, form a succession of beautiful landscapes. Passing the Isle of Anticosti, they anchored off Cape Diamond. Quebec stands

on the extremity of the Cape, and has a very romantic appearance. An immense projecting rock, with an impregnable citadel, the bright steeples of the cathedrals and churches, the houses, nunneries, and warehouses rising gradually one above another in the form of an amphitheatre, and which being covered with tin (so put on that it never rusts) to prevent conflagration, have the appearance of being covered with silver, when the rays of the sun lie on the buildings.--The crowd of shipping is beneath.--On the left stands Point Levi, thickly covered with houses, with here and there an Indian wigwam.--On the right is the fruitful island of Orleans, with its neat dwellings, clothed with lofty trees.--Beyond, the falls of Montmorenci, burst through a majestic chasm over a ledge 220 feet high, seen in an opening upon the elevated shores of Beauport,—these, and the mountains in the distance, form a most impressive and grand object.

During the few days Dudley remained at Quebec, he visited the plains of Abraham, where the gallant Wolfe so dearly purchased his renown,—and the falls of Montmorenci and La Chaudiere. Since the period of which we write, a monument commemorating the glorious deeds of Wolfe and Montcalm has been raised in the citadel. On the plains of Abraham, a simple column has also been erected on the spot where Wolfe fell, with the simple yet appropriate epitaph :

“ HERE DIED WOLFE VICTORIOUS.”

From Quebec, Dudley proceeded to Montreal, from thence to Kingston in the *bâteaux*. As we are not writing a tour, we shall therefore only briefly notice his voyage and journey, which, owing to the strength of the currents, was very tedious, occasionally compelling the party to walk a pipe or two; for so devoted is a French Canadian to the Nicotian weed, that, by the burning of his tobacco he “calculates”

the distance, and gravely tells you such a place is two pipes off ; *id est*, according to the “ weed estimate,” one mile and a half.

Generally speaking, the whole river running from the Gulph of St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario, is simply called the St. Lawrence, though it receives a large branch of the Uttawa and Iroquois rivers. Nothing could be more picturesque than the bivouac at night ; the *bâteaux* are drawn up, the tents pitched, and the crews divide themselves into gipsy groups.

Crossing the Uttawa river, the scene is splendid : each river rushes down over immense rocks, with an impetuosity which, apparently, nothing can resist, and when a raft of timber is shooting down, the danger to any object it meets is fearful. From Le saut de Trou to the Coteau des Cèdres, the rapids are so strong, that the parties quitting the *bâteaux* proceed on foot. Nothing can exceed the wild appear-

ance of the scenery ; the loud roaring of the waters, the solemn gloom of the trackless forests.

Passing through a canal near the rapids du Coteau du Lac St. François, where the stream runs fourteen miles an hour, they entered Lake St. François, encamped for the night at Isle aux Raisins, so called from the number of wild vines growing thereon. Near this spot are many islands, still in possession of the Indians. From St. Regis to the mouth of the Oswegatchee river, the rapids are numberless. On the sixth morning they entered the Lake of a Thousand Islands, twenty-five miles in length, and six in breadth ; many of the islands are scarcely larger than a *bâteau* — the largest is but from eleven to fifteen acres — all are beautifully covered with wood, forming the hunting encampments of the Indian. Kingston is a place of considerable trade, and has a commodious harbour and dock-yard.

Crossing Lake Ontario, they reached Niagara. Anxious to arrive at "the falls." Dudley lost no time in proceeding there: his expectations were raised to the highest pitch. He must indeed be a cold observer, who can see this wonder of the creation without sensations more than ordinarily solemn and intense. The stupendous water exceeds all that the most extravagant imagination can seize, and impresses on the mind, at once, the illimitable vastness of the Creator, who hath bidden such a miracle shroud itself in the majesty of mighty waters. Yet, we will not attempt to describe them, but rather, after the fashion of modern play-bills and notices of new works, refer to the "opinions of the press" upon them:—

"When we were within about three miles of the falls, we heard distinctly, though far off, the voice of the mighty cataract. Looking over the woods which appeared to overhang the course of the river, we beheld one

silver cloud, rising slowly into the sky, the everlasting incense of the waters."

"Down I sprang along the narrow foot-path, divided only by a thicket from the tumultuous rapids. I saw through the boughs the white glimmer of that sea of foam. 'Go on, go on, don't stop! shouted,——and in another minute the thicket was passed. I stood upon the table rock;——seized me by the arm, and without speaking a word dragged me to the edge of the rapids, to the brink of the abyss. I saw Niagara! O God! who can describe that sight?' This is the vivid language of Fanny Kemble;—for I must call her by her fame-name."

From Niagara, Dudley proceeded to the North West Company's station at Winnipeg. Making his way up the mazy and wandering rivers that interlace the vast forests, coasting the most remote lakes,—here the canoes were navigated by Indians;—he traversed Lake Erie,

Lake Huron, passing through the straits of St. Mary, and crossing the portage into Lake Superior. Coasting along the shores of Lake Superior they came to the grand portage; from hence by a chain of small lakes and rivers they passed Rain Lake, the Lake of the Woods, to Winnipeg. Returning nearly the same route to Fort Erie, they crossed to Buffalo creek, where they provided themselves with Indians as guides, and proceeded on foot to the Genesee river. Here the weather was cold and severe, owing to the vapour from the waters. Scarcely an animated being was to be seen; now and then a wigwam appeared, out of which a wild Indian, looking himself like an antique ruin of the forest, wildly gazed. And occasionally an eagle, like the king of the desert, looked down, glaring at the temerity of a stranger penetrating his empire.

Proceeding further into the country the sun again resumed its empire. The atmosphere was

pure; the heavens were unclouded; the influence of the great lakes had ceased; the wild meadows were verdant, the gigantic trees in rich foliage.

It is hardly possible to describe the rapture Dudley felt in traversing the forests, the eternal solitudes where still dwell the Indians, subject to privations, but happy in their liberty; the torrents, the cataracts, the great lakes, like seas, were life to him. He experienced all the charms of those vital impressions, of which nature is the only source. The rivers, the mountains, the valleys of the ancient world, are all remembered by their associations. What would the river Jordan be? a yellow current, deeply sunk below its banks, its sluggish stream rolling slowly on, scarcely distinguishable from the sands on its shores; or Sion? an almost imperceptible mound, if they did not present to our view the scene of the miracles of our religion, and impress us with the sanctity of their

renowned antiquity. Who would remark the little river that runs near Sparta, if it was not called the Eurotas? or who pause at the banks of the Illyssus, if Plato had not there informed the world with wisdom. The Aufidus, Tiber, and Po, are celebrated in the songs of Horace, Virgil, and Ovid. Not so immortalised as yet are the desert rivers of the New World; they have no names, they recal no event. You admire the majesty of their waters, the wild aspect of their courses; such as you see them, such have they been always, without any witnesses but the silent forest that covers their banks, and the haunting Indians: their beauty, their grandeur, are without the charms of associations; they are “themselves, alone!”

But to return,—Dudley reached Philadelphia, saw the beautiful banks of the Schuylkil, and after an agreeable journey arrived at New York. Delighted with his reception there, he regarded the men to the full stretch of his

ability, and admired the invariable prettiness of the women. He enjoyed the amusements of the place ; the ground was covered with snow, and Ravensworth was delighted with the “ grand times ” of winter, so ably described by Sam Slick in his “ Sayings and Doings,” of that everlasting fine country to which “ you can’t say ditto to nowhere.”

On entering the New World, Dudley resolved to leave behind him all paltry prejudices and national antipathies. He had none of that “ *Hauteur excessive, froideur, taciturnité, or mécontentment de tout ce qu’on fasse pour lui satisfaire,*” that is so often and justly a subject of complaint against his countrymen, and he was therefore everywhere received with kindness and hospitality. He was met on every side with a cordial desire to be on terms of courtesy and friendship. He saw in the mass of Americans liberal and inquiring minds ; men possessing that independence of spirit which is

their birthright. If occasionally he saw an exception, he was not harsh enough to draw general conclusions from isolated premises ; or to indulge in national anathemas for individual irregularities. Meddling and malignant spirits had not at that period wielded their mischievous pens, and propagated slanders, which, trifling in themselves, yet tend to alienate countries. How well does a modern talented writer speak on this subject : “ There is a sacred bond between us, of blood and of language, which no circumstance can break. Our literature must always be theirs ; and though their laws are no longer the same as ours, we have the same Bible, and we address our common Father in the same prayer. Nations are too apt to admit that they have natural enemies. Why should they be less willing to believe that they have natural friends ? ”

From these pursuits and new connections Dudley was aroused by a letter from his

father, informing him of his eldest brother's death: he himself, too, had been lately seized with a dangerous illness. It urged him to return. The thought that his father had been nearly taken from him, that he might never again listen to his prudent and affectionate advice, determined him immediately to return, and it was soon in the words of Hamlet, "For England, ho!"

CHAPTER XIII.

DUDLEY'S RETURN TO ENGLAND.

The joys of meeting pay the pangs of absence :
Else who could bear it ?
When thy lov'd sight shall bless my eyes again,
Then will I own I ought not to complain,
Since that sweet hour is worth whole years of pain.

ROWE'S *Tamerlane*.

Now is the hour that wakens fond desire
In men at sea, and melts their thoughtful hearts.

CAREY'S *Dante*.

But when
The tidings came that she whom he had wooed
Was wedded to another, and his heart
Was forced to rend away its only hope ;
Then, pity could have scarcely found on earth
An object worthier of regard than he,
In the transition of that bitter hour.

WORDSWORTH.

Byron says—

Pass we the long, unvarying course, the track
Oft trod, that never leaves a trace behind ;
Pass we the calm, the gale, the change, the tack,
And each well-known caprice of wave and wind ;
Pass we the joys and sorrows sailors find,
Coop'd in their winged sea-girt citadel ;
The foul, the fair, the contrary, the kind,
As breezes rise and fall and billows swell,
Till on some jocund morn—lo, land ! and all is well.

Pass we, therefore, the Atlantic, and all its world of waves. It is impossible to describe the thrill of joy Dudley felt at once more greeting the white cliffs of Albion. Time and absence had effected no chill in the ardour of his feelings. The vessel ran by the Needles, and anchored at Spithead. His feeling was an alternation of rapture and misery ; at one moment he was exulting in the anticipation of clasping Constance within his arms—and the next recalling to his mind the often repeated disappointments he had been subjected to.

With a feverish anxiety to return home,

again to see her who had never or rarely been absent from his thoughts, whose image had pursued him in every change of situation, he immediately landed. Letters awaited him, informing him of his father's convalescence, and he lost no time in ordering horses, and was speedily on his road to London. What rapturous sensations filled his heart! Every object breathed of delight—the fields, the stately woods, the towering hills, the fertile vales, the winding streams, and spacious lawns, enriched by the cloudless splendour of the setting sun, constituted a most lovely prospect. It was delightful to Dudley, to feel

“All the comforts of his English home.”

But his pleasing reflections were interrupted by an accident which detained him for some time on his road; and it was ten o'clock at night before he drove up to the door of the King's Arms at Godalming. On re-ordering

horses he was informed that a county ball was to take place that night at Guildford, and that every horse had been bespoken. The courteous landlord of one of England's very best *hotelleries* suggested that the Petersfield horses could go on to Guildford; and Dudley, understanding that General and Mrs. Dunbar, who were intimate friends of the Grahams and residents in the neighbourhood, were to attend the ball, he—with a view of hearing tidings of Constance—immediately alighted, hurried to his room, made a most finished toilet (for in those days neither black neckcloths nor loose trowsers had profaned the gracious precincts of the ball-room), and, throwing himself into the chaise, found himself, after half an hour's rattling in the yellow precarious dice-box on wheels, at the door of the county-hall, Guildford. Summoning courage, he entered the ball-room, and looked anxiously around, in the hope of discovering the party from Avesford. His

handsome and interesting appearance (for he was still pallid from the effect of his wound), attracted all attention. A lisping young creature, who introduced himself to Dudley as “Th’ cornet Mounthjoy, of the ——Huthsars,” told him a large bridal party was expected from Avesford, and that the bride was “th’ surpassingly beautiful.”

Ravensworth paid but little attention to this Exquisite. Shortly after the encounter with “Mounthjoy,” the Dunbars entered the room surrounded by a large party. On the arm of a short, round-faced good-natured looking man, (whom Dudley immediately recognised to be Lord Atherley,) he beheld Constance Graham in bridal array. To describe his feelings, the pen that writes this marriage history utterly fails. Absence, with its desolating influence, had done its worst; he had lost her—she was “the bride of another!” Events of the last two years flashed before him. Constance false!

all was "like ' a phantasma, or a hideous dream." A faintness came over him, he would have given worlds if the earth could have swallowed him up. His name had been buzzed about the room. The Dunbars approached and welcomed him most affectionately.

"Well, here you are at last, and looking better than we could have expected!" exclaimed the General, grasping Dudley's extended hand. Constance, paler and colder than marble, shrank back; while Mrs. Dunbar, in a good-humoured, off-hand manner, said,

"Mr. Ravensworth, you have surely not forgotten your old friend Constance Graham; allow me to introduce you to Lord and Lady Atherley."

At this, Lord Atherley held out a thick red specimen of the genus "hand;" and seizing, and heartily shaking Dudley's aristocratic variation of the species, said,

“Happy to renew my acquaintance with any old friend of Lady Atherley’s.”

Dudley could not reply, the words died away upon his lips. Mrs. Dunbar now approached Dudley, and, taking him to a seat, urged him to return home with their party to Avesford Priory; the country air she was sure would quite re-establish his health;—in short, she would take no refusal; and it was finally arranged that Dudley was to return, after the ball, with Lord Atherley, he having a place to spare in his carriage. Never did time pass so tediously to two beings, as the two next hours did to Dudley and Constance; their meeting had been so sudden, so afflicting, that neither had recovered self-possession.

Previously to the carriages being ordered, Lord Atherley suggested that a little tea would be no bad thing. “Always take care of the inward man, is my motto.”

“ Mr. Ravensworth,” said Mrs. Dunbar, “ pray take Lady Atherley; brides have always precedence.” There was no help for it.

Dudley, thus appealed to, must come forward: he offered his arm, she took it, they were once more together;—her arm trembled, his heart beat with an indefinable emotion, They walked in utter silence; but that silence was the eloquence—the pathetic eloquence of broken hearts. They entered the tea room, where as usual there was much eating, drinking, and flirting; where cold weak tea, hot orgeat, sour lemonade, tepid negus, and melting bread and butter, were distributed to the hungry and thirsty company.

At length the worn-out band was comforted with the sight of numbers departing,—there was a hope that the ball would soon be over. Then came the shawling and cloaking,—the half throttling with worsted comforters,—at

last, "Lord Atherley's carriage stops the way!" was announced, and Dudley found himself by the side of her, who for years had been

"His life,—
The ocean to the river of his thoughts."

Her inquiries about his health were made in faltering tones. Lord Atherley, in his usual *bonhomie* manner, said "Your old friend, Constance, must be your nurse; she will give you a drive in her pony phaeton; you must ride her own favourite pet, Azalia." Little did Lord Atherley know that Azalia had once been the property of Dudley,—that he himself had trained her for Constance,—and had named her after a flower, her first gift, the withering remains of which he still preserved with superstitious reverence. On this very flower many a solitary tear had been dropped, and many a painful sigh had been breathed in the course of his absence.

On reaching the Priory, Constance gave Dudley her hand,—which he gently held between his, and with a sigh that, soft as it was, was not lost upon her,—wished her “good night !” What mockery in the words, when left to ponder on all that had occurred. They separated;—with the full weight of discomposed thoughts, which the events of the day had produced, Constance retired to her chamber. She speedily dismissed her *femme de chambre*, and threw herself into an arm chair. Though wearied both in body and mind, she felt but little inclined to rest. Her imagination became bewildered; she strove to drive from her heart feelings which she neither dared to embody in words nor even to dwell upon. She knew not till that moment how “not wisely, but too well,” she had loved. The still small voice of conscience whispered her husband’s name; this thought restored Constance to her better feelings. She resolved

to drive Dudley from her mind, and to attach herself more than ever to Lord Atherley.

Dudley turned the events of the day indistinctly but rapidly over in his mind. He thought all of Constance. He painfully saw, and felt the difference of her manner; her words were kind, but their tone was altered. Alas! the ear too quickly notes if the voice be not as tender as in the trusting days. The alteration in a beloved but cherished object is too, too instantly discernible. Overtired and excited, he crept slowly to his room; throwing himself upon his bed, it was yet long before he fell into a slumber. His sleep was broken and feverish. Painful was the task now before Dudley; he was to wake to a world of care, and an oppressed heart. Nothing then remained but to arm himself with resolution, to pass through the appointed trial, as best he might. But *he* walks but ill who carries the barbed arrow in his breast!

Constance no sooner entered the breakfast-room, than she was met by the kind glance of Dudley ; he appeared silent, dejected, and thoughtful ; her appearance was strongly indicative of the mental struggle in which she had passed the night, nor could she evade the condolences and inquiries of all present. Mrs. Dunbar suggested a thousand remedies for headaches. Her “*dame de compagnie*,” Miss Sowerby, who knew “*Buchan*” by heart, recommended camphor julep. The General proposed an excursion to a neighbouring village, where the remains of a Roman tessellated pavement had lately been discovered. Lord Atherley seconded the proposition, and suggested that a rural luncheon would be a “*capital thing* ;” Lady Atherley could drive Mr. Ravensworth in her pony phaeton ; the air was so *exhilarating* that it would quite renovate him, and give them all appetites : the rest could ride.”

“ You will trust yourself to Constance’s coachmanship,” continued Lord Atherley; “ the drive will do you both good.”

Dudley hesitated, he felt that a tête-a-tête would be peculiarly painful. Constance seemed to penetrate his feelings, and with a trembling voice told Lord Atherley she thought it too early in the season for an open carriage; but he would not hear her, and almost forced them to a measure to which they were mutually adverse. The plan being unanimously carried, the party were not long in putting it into execution. It was a bright joyous sunshiny morning, undimmed by a single vapour, resembling more, in the beauty and clearness of its atmosphere, a spring day in the genial clime of the South.

No sooner did Dudley find himself alone by the side of Constance, than the recollection of the friend of his youth, and of the happy days passed in her society, confounded his reason.

He sat mute and absorbed; Constance saw what was passing in his mind, and endeavoured in vain to divert the current of thought, with remarks on passing objects. "It is a long time since we have met, and years make great changes." The colour rushed into Constance's cheek, and she kept her eyes bent upon the ground.

"Constance!" he said (for the feelings of his heart would not suffer him to address her by a colder name); "Constance, I have much to say to you, much that I have long wished to say; fate seems to have placed an hour at our disposal—let us not waste it."

Constance was silent, and after a pause he looked at her. "No!" she replied at length, looking up frankly, with the full light of her eyes beaming upon him; "No! our hours of mutual happiness are over!—over, and for ever! We must return, Mr. Ravensworth; you seem ill."

“ No ! Constance, not ill—it is not illness which overpowers me ; ” his voice was scarcely audible, he regarded her with painful interest. “ Constance ! ” exclaimed Dudley, and there was sadness in his tone ; “ the last few hours have been like a painful dream. If you knew how acutely I have suffered, you would at least feel compassion for me.”

“ I cannot bear to see you thus agitated,” replied Constance ; and the tone of anxious affection in which these words were pronounced went to his heart. “ If what you wish to say is painful for you to utter, wait till you are stronger and calmer.”

“ I *have* strength to speak now, and you *must* hear me ! ”

“ I will,” Constance faintly replied.

“ There was a time,” said Dudley, “ when words were unnecessary to enable us to understand one another ; when the same thoughts would occur to us both, and a look would

suffice to express all. Since then we have been parted, but I will not recur to our early days of trusting fond affection ; I had hoped to have met you calmly, but first answer me one question. Who has defamed my character ? Who has injured me in your regard ? Tell me but to whom I owe this change, that my vindication may at least make you cease to blush that once I was honoured with some share of your affection.”

“ It requires not to be restored,” said Constance with much softness, “ since it has never been alienated ; we parted, it is true, in anger, under a misconception,—I fancied I should have heard from you,—I should have perhaps written,—but scarcely had you quitted England, when my hopes were destroyed by my mother’s commands that I should hold no correspondence with you. She persuaded me you loved another ; my heart misgave me ; your silence seemed to give weight to what she

said. What could I do but believe: but, be satisfied,—and generously forbear to reproach me.”

“Are you then unchanged?” exclaimed he more gently. “Is your feeling alive for me still?”

“I have said it,” cried she, hastily interrupting him; “but as you value my friendship and earthly peace, enact from me nothing more.”

“Thanks, thanks! Forgive me,—say you forgive me!”

Constance’s low stifled sob was her only answer.

“Ill health,” responded Dudley, “the surprise of last night, have worked upon an over-excited frame; never again will I offend; it is the last time I will yield to such weakness: we will be but as friends; surely, such disinterested friendship as ours will be, must be,—unbroken.”

Constance faintly uttered "You will ever have my good wishes through life!" Dudley respired again, and, mastering his feelings, briefly recapitulated all his adventures. Nothing was left unexplained, nothing untold by him, that could clear himself from the charge of having, for one moment, any aim but obtaining her love: his letter through Miss Cressingham, his meeting with Jane Ashford, his accidental visit to the gaming-table, were unravelled; and he recited "the story of his life even from his boyish days." Her cheek coloured, and tears, the pure messengers from the heart, glistened on her long eye-lashes — they penetrated his soul, they were both very happy, and a full hour passed unheeded; not another word was spoken;—their hearts were full, far too full for words,—and yet there was a consciousness in the sad interchange of looks, which seemed,

"As if their souls that minute caught
Some treasure they through life had sought."

It was the first moment of real positive enjoyment Dudley had experienced since he left England; a feeling of renewed life seemed to seize upon his senses. Cheered in spirit by the renewal of a friendship which they both so truly valued, they were scarcely aware of their arrival at the spot selected for their rural repast. It was a wild wooded glen, through which a stream wound its serpentine course, overshadowed by lofty trees; the luncheon was spread, the bottles of champagne were cooling in the clear rushing stream — the party was assembled —

————— “and there,
Merrily seated in a ring, partook
A choice repast.”

Lord Atherley had arranged the pasties, pies, turkeys, and all the *comestibles*, and was ostentatiously displaying the bill of fare. *Bécasses aux olives, salmi de perdreau, faisan aux trûffes, cailles à la financière, pâté de lièvre, filet de*

chevreuil sauté au vin de champagne, jambon à la gelée.

“Ah,” chuckled Lord Atherley, “to what perfection have they brought the science of cookery, here we have all the luxuries *in* and *out* of season—“on connaît l’homme à ses actions, et le cuisinier à ses ragouts,” so says Le Sage. The noble epicure was busily employed selecting the truffles from a “*terraine de foie gras*,” for his own especial eating, when the pony phaeton drove up. Then amidst the usual expressions of “lovely day,” “beautiful drive,” “perfect spot,” “charming view,” Lady Atherley was assisted to alight.

“Almost too late, Constance,” said her sposo; “but stay, take a little of this *gallantine*, delicious—excellent! or this *Dindon aux trûffes*, perfect!” Little did he know they had communed with their better natures; all the jarring cares, the vexatious contentions, the wayward passions had sunk into nothing-

ness ; they had felt the calm pleasure of lovers , explanations, surmounting even a state of hopelessness. As usual at all pic-nics, in this vapour-encumbered climate, there was a deficiency of enjoyment after the first burst of admiration was over ; there was a languor, a want of spirit, an absence of union that could not be got over.

The luncheon over, the party amused themselves in different ways, and for once, in a party of pleasure, it was agreed that the weather was perfect. Constance and Ravensworth, on their return, had been driving for some time through green shady lanes, those lanes peculiar to “ Merrie England :” they felt the beauty of the sweet-scented hedges, of the wild flowers scattered about, and the “ lonely thatched cottage” covered with roses and ivy, nestling in its orchard overhanging the road. Conscious of not another thought but that of each other’s presence, the party in the phaeton

sat enjoying the beauty of the scenery, until the sun had nearly faded from the sky, when they were suddenly startled by the flickering motion of the leaves, followed by a distant noise. Dudley now observed the sky overcast; the wind had gathered vapours until it had charged the distant horizon with a dark thick scud: the clouds were tinged with a reddish fiery gloom, and seemed ready to explode. At length the pattering of some heavy drops of rain warned him of the coming storm; the trees waved like fields of corn; soon the lightning glanced slightly, and the thunder threatened only a murmuring war, till, as the heavy-laden clouds were borne nearer, a fitful gleam, successive and broader flashes appeared, and illumined the sky, followed by the accumulated thunders of a thousand storms; then succeeded a moment of dead calm — all was silent. At last the cumbrous drops of heavy rain descended in torrents on the parched

earth. There was no time for reflection ; Dudley, drenched and terrified, urged the horses on ; they entered the avenue ; the blossoms of the wild chesnut-trees fell thick around them ; a fearful flash gleamed, then there was another frightful glare of sulphurous lights, and the roar of the thunder (Heaven's artillery !) was augmented by the splintered trees that fell on all sides. One of the finest oaks was riven into splinters by a thunder-bolt.

“ It is over, Constance,” whispered Dudley ;
“ it is over ; thank Heaven ! ”

“ What a happiness to have you near me at such a time ! ” exclaimed Constance, looking up with thankfulness. At that moment the clouds dispersed, and a ray of sunshine broke through the dropping foliage, and fell on the hapless yet happy pair !

CHAPTER XIV.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

Cloudy mists every valley and hill buries ;
Spurred and booted on sofas we sprawl.
Back with the gallows, put up the tilburies,
Sad wet weather at Drizzledown Hall.
One cannot read Waverley twice over cleverly ;
Talents should never lie idle a day :
Best of all madrigals, private Theatricals !
All that we want is to settle the play.

JAMES SMITH.

AVESFORD PRIORY was an old Elizabethan building, and owed its origin to an abbey founded by Hubert de Wallingford in 659. In those days the building was appropriated

to monks and nuns of the Benedictine order. It was destroyed by the Danes, but rebuilt after the conquest. In the reign of Henry the VIII. it shared the fate of other monastic institutions of England. The ruins of its magnificent church still remained, and the present mansion, an old, Elizabethan building, combined the ideas of ancient baronial grandeur with those of modern date. The party there assembled consisted of the host and hostess, General and the Hon. Mrs. Dunbar: the former had *lifted*, as the Scotch phrase it, a handsome fortune in the East, and had laid it at the feet of the Hon. Margaret Blakiston, the daughter of a Madras judge. The General had been a great traveller, and indulged in those *longbowian* propensities, usually attributed to travellers, whether at home or in foreign climes. His description of the monsoon was his favourite topic. "Awful! terrific! Wind blowing the tall, slim cocoa-nut trees into the air! Light-

ning gave you an idea of a general conflagration!—thunder awfully loud, as if the whole earth was undermined, and was saying as much!—fish blown from the sea by the violence of the gale, and found alive upon the flat roofs of the houses! Oh! frightful, terrific!” Mrs. Dunbar was what is called “the best creature imaginable,” strongly addicted to a “snarley yow,” King Charles’s spaniel, named “Fay.” No individual felt more strongly the importance of asserting that canine partnership in the trade of the affections, which is based on the old saying of “Love me, love my dog.” Hence her great regard for Dudley, who had, previous to his going abroad, saved the Fairy from the fangs of a huge mastiff.

Miss Sowerby, a most primitive pattern of preciseness, very tall, very strait, very silent, very cold and very correct, was a “young person” of forty, a perfect polyglot of languages, a pedant in petticoats, a vocabulary

of polysyllabics. To her learned lore of ancient and modern history, geography, astronomy, botany, experimental chemistry and philosophy, she added the modern accomplishments of varnishing and gilding, and japaning, and etching, and modelling, and engraving, in mezzo tinto and aqua tinta ; she excelled in the manufactory of card-racks and hand-screens, and, for her board and lodging, and a new year's cadeau of two silk dresses and a velvet bonnet, made herself generally useful as a *souffre-douleur*, anglicè toad-eater. She was active in washing, combing, and walking out with Fay, keeping her in blue ribbons ; turning over music, playing quadrilles, country-dances and waltzes ; listening to everlasting stories with indefatigable patience, attention, and approbation : she added to all these the cutting the pages of new novels, drawing patterns, mending all the pens, making alumets, winding silk, sorting worsted, looking after

the birds, watering the plants in the drawing-room, arranging sofa cushions, keeping accounts, and writing confidential letters. She was looked upon in the establishment as a "*meuble de plus.*" Miss Sowerby had been brought up at Minerva House, Paragon, Hoxton, where reading and speaking, writing and arithmetic, foreign languages, geography, geometry and astronomy, biography and mythology, natural history, natural philosophy, address and conversation, poetry, painting and music, dancing, dress, housewifery, needlework and embroidery, stepping into carriages, and gymnastics, were all taught, (board and lodging included, and young ladies finished,) for the small sum of twenty to twenty-five pounds, per annum; the same young ladies to bring with them six towels and a silver spoon,—meditated fixtures.

Among the gentlemen, the most conspicuous, by means of his dress, was the Hon. Augustus

Priddie, a lisping Werter-like looking youth, highly romantic, brim-full of sentiment, with dark curly hair; he wore his shirt-collar Byronically tied with a black riband; adored his original,—was strongly addicted to theatricals, was *au fait* at all the coulisse scandal,—and in short, was one who lived by his wits. He was *the* man,—

“Who, when he puts his hat upon his pate
Claps a ring fence around his whole estate,—”

possessing a sort of *Je ne sais quoi* languid impertinence, he piqued himself upon having gone uninvited to a *fête* at Carlton House, or, as he called it, “having sported a face,” and had lately, according to his own version, been passing a week at a house, where, the husband and wife not being upon speaking terms, he had felt secure that neither would take the trouble of inquiring by which he had been asked. He piqued himself on his figure. His

written orders to his tailor, were laconic, “six feet, and perfect symmetry.” In fine, he was as pretty a specimen of two yards and a nail of puppyism, as could well be imagined.

The next, who, for forwardness, took care to be noticed, was Harry Bibury, a man who made money by the turf, by play, by horses, and who could drive four bloods and a bargain, better than any young fellow about town. He was a walking racing calendar, and could tell you the pedigree of every horse from Eclipse, down to the winner of the last two-year old stake, and used a peculiar phraseology, better calculated for Tattersall’s subscription den than the drawing-room. He cared for nothing; he could do every thing and every body; was very erudite in the art and mystery of giving and taking the long odds, knowingly;—making a book, hedging, and even handicapping, (the mathematics of racing;) a perfect *Jonathan* at billiards,—a Tom Smith in the hunting field, a

crack shot,—a first-rate whip,—a good judge of a horse. He was the best amateur sparrer at the Court, and would undertake to walk, run, or hop a match with any man in the United Kingdom.

Then, there was Horace Latimer, one of that large class which, *par excellence*, come under the denomination of young men of talent. Such men, the pride of their sisters and the glory of their grandmothers, are men of whom great things are expected, and who, after great preparation and promise, end in utter and elegant nothingness.

There were, independent of the above, sundry country gentlemen, Squire Westerns of the olden times, with their wives and daughters;—the latter, being young ladies, slender, fair-haired, blue-eyed scraps of innocence, who passed their mornings in perforating silk with tambour needles,—making note-cases for uncles and cousins, (in those halcyon days of the one-

pound system when gentlemen directors were coining money,) and passing their evenings in "doing" the "Downfal of Paris" cross-handed on the piano; occasionally, perchance, enlivening their concerts with "Young Loch-invar," and "O Pescator dell' onda."

For some days private theatricals had been upon the tapis. The arrival of Dudley had given an impetus to their wishes. Harry Bibury proposed him as manager, "a regular fast one, and no mistake." Priddie, who had been at Westminster with him, seconded the nomination, and reminded him of the time when at Mother Pack's, the Deans-yard dame, (we speak it not profanely, for a better creature never existed), they had mourned over the dead body of Julius Cæsar, and had strutted and fretted their hour in Norval and Glenalvon.

The inclination to act was now awakened and encouraged, and by none more so than

by the host and hostess. "The Avesford private theatricals would enliven the neighbourhood," exclaimed the happy pair at once. — For some time Mrs. Dunbar had had them in full contemplation. Unfortunately a love affair, which ended in an elopement between the hero and heroine, had retarded the progress; once the serious illness of the Thespian hostess checked their course; and, lastly, a violent quarrel between all parties had nearly put an end to the matter. At last, after many consultations, a play was fixed on, and was not changed more than twenty times before the necessary rehearsals. — After frequent variations and transmigrations from comedy to tragedy, tragedy to comedy, farce to comedy, interlude to opera; — a death in the family put a serious and sudden stop to the proceedings.

On the present occasion, the first rainy day decided the important question; few of the party

could settle down to any indoor occupation. Billiards, backgammon, chess, battledore and shuttlecock, were all tried in turn, and in vain. Some paced the house from room to room, — walking from window to window, — beating the devil's tattoo upon them, and “wondering whether it would clear up.” The library, used as a morning room, did not present a very attractive scene; — Lady Atherley was suffering under a headache; — Lord Atherley under a heart-burn, — rolled himself into a chair. Miss Sowerby, in an affected manner, was copying music; — Mrs. Dunbar was attentively studying the last number of “*La belle Assemblée*.” Ravensworth seemed absorbed in a book; — Harry Bibury brought his favourite pointer “Tip,” into the room; — pulled its ears, then kicked the poor beast out of it; — then looked over his gun-case, and sighed; — looked at his fishing tackle, and grumbled; — then

negligently tossed the balls of a bagatelle board. — The General gave an awful description of a storm in India! — Priddie hummed a tune, and devoted himself for a few moments to a young lady, who soon shocked the Exquisite, by saying, “She never wished to go to London.” At this moment Lady Atherley approached, and the Honourable Augustus Priddie, who considered himself completely formed for *la belle passion*, moved languidly. He was a good-natured, showy animal, — quoted his friend, Brummell the First (as he called him), on every occasion. Augustus le désiré had a trick of talking in half-whispers. He now approached Lady Atherley, “How unkind to leave town so early!” lisped the *crève-cœur*, displaying his worked handkerchief breathing the odorous perfumes of Arabia. “What, in the name of wonder, could you find to amuse yourself with in the country? it was

positively inhuman. You ought never to leave London until strawberries and cherries become plebeian food."

"I am unfashionable enough to like the country in spring; besides, Lord Atherley's avocations rendered it necessary," replied Lady Atherley.

"What an idea! Such old-fashioned notions would adorn a curiosity-shop extremely well!—Don't mention the vile *campagna*!—the poet's elysium, your rustic temples, moss seats, gay parterres, sunny glades, shady groves, labyrinthine walks, pebbled pavements, *déjeûners al fresco*, cooing doves, lowing herds!—they are odious. Then the winter; vegetation is always in a torpid state;—'naked shoots, barren as lances,' as Cowper, I think, describes them. O *Cielo*! London and its beauties for me!" here he cast a glance at a large looking-glass in the room and kept continually gazing at

himself, setting his neckcloth, and arranging his curls; — “but, positively, Lord Atherley must not be so Gothish as to take you away before the season. ’T was inconsolable, — *au désespoir*, — positively staid away from one opera,—honor bright.” Here the amiable Destructive tried to look sentimental, held his eyes bashfully down, and heaved a sigh, so piteous and profound, that it seemed to shatter all his bulk and end his being.

Dudley joined the party. “We were talking of the opera,” said the Narcissus, still adjusting his hair; “the divine Catalani, how classical her appearance!” This was a theme the Honourable Augustus liked to dwell upon; and he ran over the names and respective merits of every opera singer and dancer with incredible volubility.

“Talking of plays, Lady Atherley,” said Mrs. Dunbar, entering the room, “the General

and I have settled the night for our opening ; let us adjourn to the little library, henceforward our green-room." A council was formed, and Dudley was unanimously invested with managerial powers. All that was then required was, as the song says, " to settle the play ;" and the business of finding one that would suit everybody proved be no trifling task : then commenced the difficulties to which managers are " heirs to ;" the first squabble began whether the play should be tragedy, comedy, or melo-drama. Augustus Priddie and Mrs. Dunbar were for tragedy : the former lisped, the latter could not pronounce her *r*. But then the dress would be so becoming ! Hamlet, Douglas, Jane Shore, or even a scene out of Othello, was suggested, but in vain, the hint was scouted ; the General was arbitrary, and would hear of nothing but comedy.

" Much Ado About Nothing and The Liar," whispered Priddie, (piqued at not being able to

“rant and tear a passion to rags,”) “would be the most appropriate.”

The difficulty was at length got over by Dudley suggesting the Screen and other “connecting scenes from the School for Scandal,” an occasional address by the Hon. Augustus Priddie, and some *tableaux vivans* for those who thought “beauty needed the foreign aid of ornament.” The proposition was met with a general acquiescence; Priddie was particularly pleased, both with the thought of his dress and address. The *dramatis personæ* in the School for Scandal were soon filled up; the General would be quite at home in Uncle Noll; the Atherleys would do the Teazles to the life; and Lord Atherley shrugged up his shoulders, and a jealous twinge ran through his heart, when he thought of the opening speech, “When an old man marries a young wife, what is he to expect?” &c. To do Priddie justice, he possessed an equal willing-

ness to take either the parts of Joseph or Charles Surface.

“Mr. Ravensworth *must* be Charles,” exclaimed many voices ; it was, therefore, so settled. Mrs. Dunbar would “walk on” for the gentle “Mawia”—so she called it ; innocence and simplicity in a muslin dress, with a blue sash.

The play being thus settled, a large gallery was immediately to be converted into a theatre. Money was (to use the General’s own words) no object ; carpenters, scene-painters, from the neighbouring town, were forthwith set to work, and, in less than ten days, the edifice was completed. Every thing was now in train ; the actors, actresses, and dresses were getting forward, rehearsals were taking place, and, as usual, nobody attended punctually, nobody remembered the sides at which they were to come on, and nobody observed the directions of the prompter. Augustus Priddie had written “an

address for the opening of the Avesford private theatre," which he spouted morning, noon, and night to every body around him, and himself ! The night arrived; all being assembled, the bell rang; an overture was played ; the curtain drew up,—Augustus Priddie made his appearance, dressed in a black bugled velvet Hamlet's dress, and in a profusion of feathers, making him look like a very respectable living hearse. He advanced to the lights, and, after a considerable number of bows,—began ; —

“ Like a young lover, in whose anxious face
His modest yet ambitious hopes you trace,
To plead the cause of our untutored band,
And claim indulgence from their friends,—I stand :—

And true enough, stand he did ; — for not one other word could he utter ; in vain he looked for the prompter, who had been called away to “ go through a scene with Mrs. Dunbar.” After some little delay, that most important personage appeared at the wing ; but

unfortunately, no copy of the address had been retained. It had been sent to the county newspaper, with an elaborate critique on the admirable manner in which the honourable speaker had composed and delivered it. After stammering for some time, and repeating

——“indulgence from their friends, I stand !”——

he proceeded in the following disjointed manner, —

“ To plead,— to plead,— I trust,— we trust the cause
Of our endeavours — merit some applause —
Applause — no, I forgot !—
Not approbation ! from the crowd we ask ! —
—— Be this our highest prize —
A smile from beauty’s cheek, or tear from beauty’s eyes !”

a round of applause from some “ claqueurs,” headed by La Fleur, (the honourable speaker’s gentlemen’s gentleman in the gallery, which had been erected for the “ High life below stairs” company,) welcomed this effusion. The curtain then rose for the comedy, and the last act of

the School for Scandal commenced. With the exception of Lady Atherley and Dudley all seemed vapid and without merit. This performance reminded one of the story told by Sheridan, who, on being asked at an amateur play, "whom he liked best," replied, "the prompter; for I have heard more, and seen less of him than any other!" Constance's performance was the *beau idéal* of well-bred animation, gay intelligence and lively variety; with a voice brilliantly modulated, a taste most refined, she imparted a charm and vivacity to all around, perfectly enchanting. In the scene where Lady Teazle is penetrated with gratitude at Sir Peter's generosity, Constance appeared to still greater advantage; her eyes, her pathetic voice, her dejected air, and penetrating countenance, went to the feelings of her auditors. Lord Atherley was so overcome and enraptured, that, at the peace-making he pressed her lips with so much tenderness, as to draw

down a round of approbation, on this, his only natural bit of performance. Dudley evinced the greatest taste, spirit and judgment, giving life and meaning to every sentence. The General knew not the ghost of a line, filling up the pauses by making faces at the audience, and giving his own, instead of the author's words ; and the lovely young "Mawia" was the essence of insipidity, "the sublime of mediocrity."

The curtain fell amidst long and loud applause.

The following morning the county paper and Independent Gazette "opened."

AVESFORD PRIORY.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

"This elegant entertainment was most eminently distinguished for the charming taste with which every accommodation was provided and disposed ; artificial flowers embellished the

gardens and grounds, (which were brilliantly illuminated,) where Nature withheld her decorations. A temporary theatre was erected in the long gallery ; the building, beautifully and classically arranged, was considered as highly characteristic of the wealth, taste, and refined elegance of the liberal host and hostess ; at a little after seven o'clock, the company, which was numerous, brilliant, and very select, began to arrive.

“ The performance commenced with a most pointed and brilliant address, attributed, we know not how truly, to the pen of the Hon. Augustus Priddie, and which was spoken by the reputed author with a fascinating excellence that particularly displayed the wit and elegance of its writing. The celebrated Screen scene from the *School for Scandal* was most admirably represented. The principal male performers were General Dunbar, Lord Atherley, Hon. Augustus Priddie, Hon. Dudley Ravens-

worth. Where all were excellent it would be invidious to select ; but we cannot withhold our humble meed of approbation from General Dunbar, who sustained the part of Sir Oliver Surface with an energetic faithfulness to his audience and his author, and an accurate discrimination, that were irresistibly impressive upon the feelings of all present. Maria was performed with all that taste, pathos, and classical propriety which so eminently distinguish the sensibility and accomplished mind of the modern Thalia—the hon. Mrs. General Dunbar. This selection was followed by some *tableaux vivans*, arranged by the talented hostess, and possessing all the merit of taste and genius which always characterise her plans, or performances. A masterly band of music attended on this occasion. At an early hour the whole party sat down to supper, consisting—as of course it would,—of the most sumptuous

viands of all the varieties luxury could suggest or the seasons produce, in a most exquisite service of plate richly decorated; the disposition of the lights—the arrangement of the tables and side-boards—the bright constellation of beauty and youth, heightened by every possible embellishment, and the charms of artificial harmony, ameliorated by the animated prattle of human voices—created such variety both to the eye and ear, as to produce the most powerful general effect. A dance then commenced, which lasted till a late hour next morning, when the parties broke up, with no other regret than that they had enjoyed the society of each other so short a time, and that the period of their separation could not be longer postponed.”

Doctors disagree, and so do editors, for the County Telegraph gave the following notice :—

PRIVATE THÉATRICALS.—AVESFORD PRIORY.

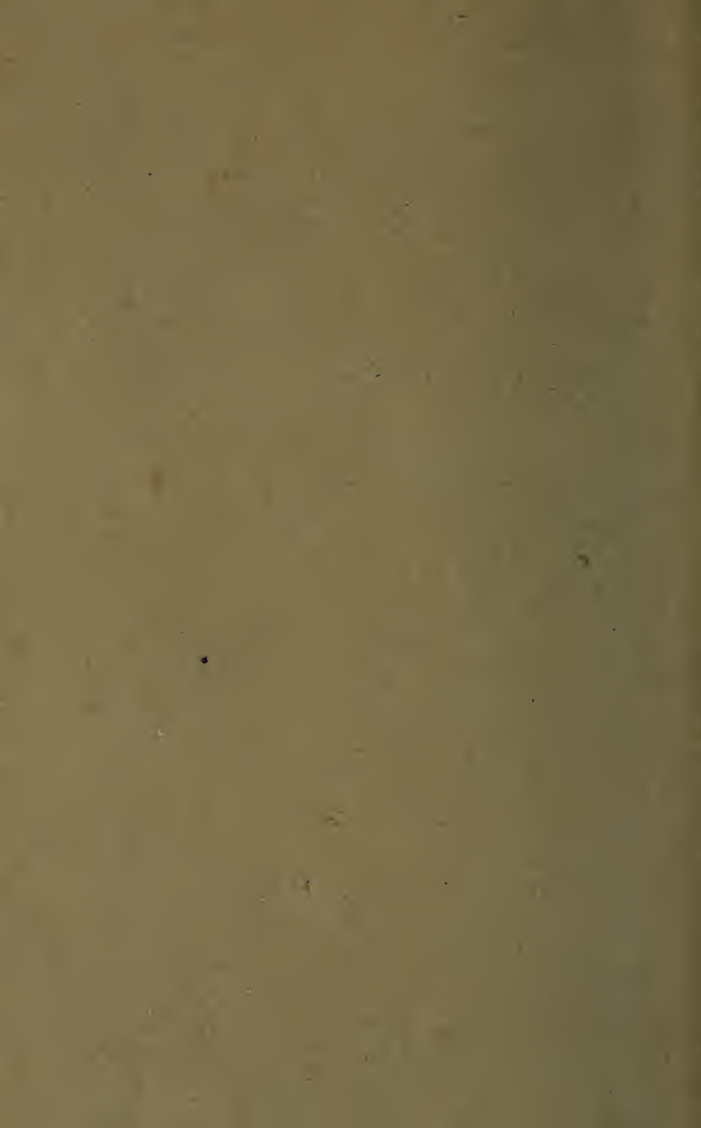
“The performances commenced with an occasional address, which the Hon. Augustus Priddie attempted to speak. It was a miserable failure, pointless and vapid. Of Lord Atherley, in Sir Peter Teazle, we can only say we never witnessed a more imbecile performance. General Dunbar is (as a performer on the boards) a mere stick, and the whole representation was not unworthy of Scowton’s booth, who, if our readers recollect, figured last year at our fair, giving us a melo-drama, two murders, and a ghost, a comic pantomime, a song in character, two dances, an overture, and some incidental music, in the small space of twenty minutes.”

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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